THE GENTLE ART OF MAKING ENEMIES

CHELSEA

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No. 139

THE GENTLE ART

OF

MAKING ENEMIES

Chelsea

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In the presence of a continued attempt to issue a spurious and garbled version of Mr. Whistler's writings, the Publisher has obtained his permission to bring out the present volume, printed under his own immediate care and supervision.

AN EXTRAORDINARY PIRATICAL PLOT

A most curiously well-concocted piratical scheme to publish, without his knowledge or consent, a complete collection of Mr. Whistler's writings, letters, pamphlets, lectures, &c., has been nipped in the bud on the very eve of its accomplishment. It appears that the book was actually in type and ready for issue, but the plan was to bring out the work simultaneously in England and America. This caused delay, the plates having to be shipped to New York, and the strain of secrecy upon the conspirators during the interval would seem to have been too great. In any case indications of surrounding mystery, quite sufficient to arouse Mr. Whistler's attention, brought about his rapid action. Messrs. Lewis and Lewis were instructed to take out immediate injunction against the publication in both England and America, and this information, at once cabled across, warning all publishers in the United States, exploded the plot, effectually frustrating the elaborate machinations of those engaged in it.

"*American Register*," *Paris, March* 8, 1890.

SEIZURE OF MR WHISTLER'S PIRATED WRITINGS

"*New York Herald*," *London Edition, March* 23, 1890.

This pirated collection of letters, writings, &c., to whose frustrated publication in this country and America we have already alluded, was seized in Antwerp, at the printers', on Friday last—the very day of its contracted delivery. The persistent and really desperate speculator in this volume of difficult birth, baffled in his attempt to produce it in London and New York, had been tracked to Antwerp by Messrs. Lewis and Lewis; and he was finally brought down by Maître Maeterlinck, the distinguished lawyer of that city.

With regard to this matter, to which we have already alluded on a previous occasion, Messrs. Lewis and Lewis have received the following letter from Messrs. Field and Tuer, of the Leadenhall Press, dated March 25, 1890 :—

"Pall Mall Gazette," March 27, 1890.

"*We have seen the paragraph in yesterday's 'Pall Mall Gazette' relating to the publication of Mr. Whistler's letters. You may like to know that we recently put into type for a certain person a series of Mr. Whistler's letters and other matter, taking it for granted that Mr. Whistler had given permission. Quite recently, however, and fortunately in time to stop the work being printed, we were told that Mr. Whistler objected to his letters being published. We then sent for the person in question, and told him that until he obtained Mr. Whistler's sanction we declined to proceed further with the work, which, we may tell you, is finished and cast ready for printing, and the type distributed. From the time of this interview we have not seen or heard from the person in question, and there the matter rests.*"

MR. WHISTLER'S PAPER HUNT

"*Sunday Times*," *March* 30, 1890.

The fruitless attempt to publish without his consent, or rather in spite of his opposition, the collected writings of Mr. Whistler has developed into a species of chase from press to press, and from country to country. With an extraordinary fatality, the unfortunate fugitive has been invariably allowed to reach the very verge of achievement before he was surprised by the long arm of Messrs. Lewis and Lewis. Each defeat has been consequently attended with infinite loss of labour, material and money. Our readers have been told how the London venture came to nought, and how it was frustrated in America. The venue was then changed, and Belgium, as a neutral ground, was supposed possible; but here again, on the very day of its delivery, the edition of 2000 *vols. was seized by M. le Procureur du Roi, and under the nose of the astounded and discomfited speculator, the packed and corded bales, of which he was about to take possession, were carried off in the Government van! The upshot of the untiring efforts of this persistent adventurer at length results in furnishing Mr. Whistler with the first and only copy of this curious work, which was certainly anything but the intention of its compiler, who clearly, judging from its contents, had reserved for him an unpleasing if not crushing surprise!*

A GREAT LITERARY CURIOSITY

I have to-day seen the printed book itself of the Collected Writings of Mr. Whistler, whose publication has proved so comically impossible. The style of the preface and accessory comments is in the worst style of Western editorship; while the disastrous effect of Mr. Whistler's literature upon the one who has burned his fingers with it, is amusingly shown.

In the index occur such well-known names as Mr. J. C. Horsley, R.A., Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Linley Sambourne, Mr. Swinburne, Tom Taylor, Mr. Frith, and Rossetti. The famous catalogue of the "Second Exhibition of Venice Etchings, February 19, 1883," in which Mr. Whistler quotes the critics, is also given.

"*Pall Mall Gazette*,' March 1890.

A LAST EFFORT

"*Pall Mall Gazette*," *April* 9, 1890.

We hear that a third attempt has been made to produce the pirated copy of Mr. Whistler's collected writings. Messrs. Lewis and Lewis have at once taken legal steps to stop the edition (printed in Paris) at the Customs. A cablegram has been received by Mr. Whistler's solicitors stating that Messrs. Stokes's name has been affixed to the title-page of the pirated book without the sanction of those publishers.

THE GENTLE ART

OF

MAKING ENEMIES

AS PLEASINGLY EXEMPLIFIED
IN MANY INSTANCES, WHEREIN THE SERIOUS ONES
OF THIS EARTH, CAREFULLY EXASPERATED, HAVE
BEEN PRETTILY SPURRED ON TO UNSEEMLINESS
AND INDISCRETION, WHILE OVERCOME BY AN
UNDUE SENSE OF RIGHT

LONDON MDCCCXC
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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To

The rare Few, who, early in Life,
have rid Themselves of the Friendship
of the Many, these pathetic Papers
are inscribed

"*Messieurs les Ennemis!*"

Prologue

Professor John Ruskin in *Fors Clavigera*, July 2, 1877.

"FOR Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face."

JOHN RUSKIN.

The Action

IN the Court of Exchequer Division on Monday, before Baron Huddleston and a special jury, the case of Whistler *v.* Ruskin came on for hearing. In this action the plaintiff claimed £1000 damages.

Lawsuit for Libel against Mr. Ruskin Nov. 15, 1878.

Mr. Serjeant Parry and Mr. Petheram appeared for the plaintiff; and the Attorney-General and Mr. Bowen represented the defendant.

Mr. Serjeant Parry, in opening the case on behalf of the plaintiff, said that Mr. Whistler had followed the profession of an artist for many years, both in this and other countries. Mr. Ruskin, as would be probably known to the gentlemen of the jury, held perhaps the highest position in Europe and America as an art critic, and some of his works were, he might say, destined to immortality. He was, in fact, a gentleman of the highest reputation. In the July number of *Fors Clavigera* there appeared passages in which Mr. Ruskin criticised what he called "the

modern school," and then followed the paragraph of which Mr. Whistler now complained, and which was: "For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." That passage, no doubt, had been read by thousands, and so it had gone forth to the world that Mr. Whistler was an ill-educated man, an impostor, a cockney pretender, and an impudent coxcomb.

Mr. WHISTLER, cross-examined by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, said: "I have sent pictures to the Academy which have not been received. I believe that is the experience of all artists. . . . . The nocturne in black and gold is a night piece, and represents the fireworks at Cremorne."

"Not a view of Cremorne?"

"If it were called a view of Cremorne, it would certainly bring about nothing but disappointment on the part of the beholders. (*Laughter.*) It is an artistic arrangement. It was marked two hundred guineas."

"Is not that what we, who are not artists, would call a stiffish price?"

"I think it very likely that that may be so."

"But artists always give good value for their money, don't they?"

"I am glad to hear that so well established. (*A laugh.*) I do not know Mr. Ruskin, or that he holds the view that a picture should only be exhibited when it is finished, when nothing can be done to improve it, but that is a correct view; the arrangement in black and gold was a finished picture, I did not intend to do anything more to it."

"Now, Mr. Whistler. Can you tell me how long it took you to knock off that nocturne?"

. . . . "I beg your pardon?" (*Laughter.*)

"Oh! I am afraid that I am using a term that applies rather perhaps to my own work. I should have said, How long did you take to paint that picture?"

"Oh, no! permit me, I am too greatly flattered to think that you apply, to work of mine, any term that you are in the habit of using with reference to your own. Let us say then how long did I take to—'knock off,' I think that is it—to knock off that nocturne; well, as well as I remember, about a day."

"Only a day?"

"Well, I won't be quite positive; I may have still put a few more touches to it the next day if the painting were not dry. I had better say then, that I was two days at work on it."

"Oh, two days! The labour of two days, then, is that for which you ask two hundred guineas!"

"No;—I ask it for the knowledge of a lifetime." (*Applause.*)

"You have been told that your pictures exhibit some eccentricities?"

"Yes; often." (*Laughter.*)

"You send them to the galleries to incite the admiration of the public?"

"That would be such vast absurdity on my part, that I don't think I could." (*Laughter.*)

"You know that many critics entirely disagree with your views as to these pictures?"

"It would be beyond me to agree with the critics."

"You don't approve of criticism then?"

"I should not disapprove in any way of technical criticism by a man whose whole life is passed in the practice of the science which he criticises; but for the opinion of a man whose life is not so passed I would have as little regard as you would, if he expressed an opinion on law."

"You expect to be criticised?"

"Yes; certainly. And I do not expect to be affected by it, until it becomes a case of this kind. It is not only when criticism is inimical that I object to it, but also when it is incompetent. I hold that none but an artist can be a competent critic."

"You put your pictures upon the garden wall, Mr. Whistler, or hang them on the clothes line, don't you —to mellow?"

"I do not understand."

"Do you not put your paintings out into the garden?"

"Oh! I understand now. I thought, at first, that you were perhaps again using a term that you are accustomed to yourself. Yes; I certainly do put the canvases into the garden that they may dry in the open air while I am painting, but I should be sorry to see them 'mellowed.'"

"Why do you call Mr. Irving 'an arrangement in black'?" (*Laughter.*)

Mr. Baron Huddleston: "It is the picture and not Mr. Irving that is the arrangement."

A discussion ensued as to the inspection of the pictures, and incidentally Baron Huddleston remarked that a critic must be competent to form an opinion, and bold enough to express that opinion in strong terms if necessary.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL complained that no answer was given to a written application by the defendant's solicitors for leave to inspect the pictures which the plaintiff had been called upon to produce at the trial. The WITNESS replied that Mr. Arthur Severn had been to his studio to inspect the paintings, on behalf of the defendant, for the purpose of passing his final judgment upon them and settling that question for ever.

Cross-examination continued: "What was the subject of the nocturne in blue and silver belonging to Mr. Grahame?"

"A moonlight effect on the river near old Battersea Bridge."

"What has become of the nocturne in black and gold?"

"I believe it is before you." (*Laughter.*)

The picture called the nocturne in blue and silver, was now produced in Court.

"That is Mr. Grahame's picture. It represents Battersea Bridge by moonlight."

BARON HUDDLESTON: "Which part of the picture is the bridge?" (*Laughter.*)

His Lordship earnestly rebuked those who laughed. And witness explained to his Lordship the composition of the picture.

"Do you say that this is a correct representation of Battersea Bridge?"

"I did not intend it to be a 'correct' portrait of the bridge. It is only a moonlight scene and the pier in the centre of the picture may not be like the piers at Battersea Bridge as you know them in broad daylight. As to what the picture represents that depends upon who looks at it. To some persons it may represent all that is intended; to others it may represent nothing."

"The prevailing colour is blue?"

"Perhaps."

"Are those figures on the top of the bridge intended for people?"

"They are just what you like."

"Is that a barge beneath?"

"Yes. I am very much encouraged at your perceiving that. My whole scheme was only to bring about a certain harmony of colour."

"What is that gold-coloured mark on the right of the picture like a cascade?"

"The 'cascade of gold' is a firework."

A second nocturne in blue and silver was then produced.

WITNESS: "That represents another moonlight scene on the Thames looking up Battersea Reach. I completed the mass of the picture in one day."

The Court then adjourned. During the interval the jury visited the Probate Court to view the pictures which had been collected in the Westminster Palace Hotel.

After the Court had re-assembled the "Nocturne in Black and Gold" was again produced, and Mr. WHISTLER was further cross-examined by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL: "The picture represents a distant view of Cremorne with a falling rocket and other fireworks. It occupied two days, and is a finished picture. The black monogram on the frame was placed in its position with reference to the proper decorative balance of the whole."

"You have made the study of Art your study of a lifetime. Now, do you think that anybody looking at that picture might fairly come to the conclusion that it had no peculiar beauty?"

"I have strong evidence that Mr. Ruskin did come to that conclusion."

"Do you think it fair that Mr. Ruskin should come to that conclusion?"

"What might be fair to Mr. Ruskin I cannot answer."

"Then you mean, Mr. Whistler, that the initiated in technical matters might have no difficulty in understanding your work. But do you think now that you could make *me* see the beauty of that picture?"

The witness then paused, and examining attentively the Attorney-General's face and looking at the picture alternately, said, after apparently giving the subject much thought, while the Court waited in silence for his answer :

"No! Do you know I fear it would be as hopeless as for the musician to pour his notes into the ear of a deaf man. (*Laughter.*)

"I offer the picture, which I have conscientiously painted, as being worth two hundred guineas. I have known unbiassed people express the opinion that it represents fireworks in a night-scene. I would not complain of any person who might simply take a different view."

The Court then adjourned.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL, in resuming his address on behalf of the defendant on Tuesday, said he hoped to convince the jury, before his case closed, that Mr. Ruskin's criticism upon the plaintiff's pictures was perfectly fair and *bonâ fide ;** and that, however severe it might be, there was nothing that could reasonably be complained of. . . . . Let them examine the nocturne in blue and silver, said to represent Battersea Bridge. What was that structure in the middle? Was it a telescope or a fire-escape? Was it like Battersea Bridge? What were the figures

* "Enter now the great room with the Veronese at the end of it, for which the painter (*quite rightly*) was summoned before the Inquisition of State."—Prof. JOHN RUSKIN : *Guide to Principal Pictures, Academy of Fine Arts, Venice.*

at the top of the bridge? And if they were horses and carts, how in the name of fortune were they to get off? Now, about these pictures, if the plaintiff's argument was to avail, they must not venture publicly to express an opinion, or they would have brought against them an action for damages.

After all, Critics had their uses.* He should like to know what would become of Poetry, of Politics, of Painting, if Critics were to be extinguished? Every Painter struggled to obtain fame.

No Artist could obtain fame, except through criticism.†

. . . . As to these pictures, they could only come to the conclusion that they were strange fantastical conceits, not worthy to be called works of Art.

. . . . Coming to the libel, the Attorney-General said it had been contended that Mr. Ruskin was not justified in interfering with a man's livelihood. But why not? Then it was said, "Oh! you have ridiculed Mr. Whistler's pictures." If Mr. Whistler disliked ridicule, he should not have subjected himself to it by exhibiting publicly such productions. If a man thought a picture was a daub‡ he had a right to say so, without subjecting himself to a risk of an action.

He would not be able to call Mr. Ruskin, as he was far too ill to attend; but, if he had been able to appear,

* "I have now given up ten years of my life to the single purpose of enabling myself to judge rightly of art . . . . earnestly desiring to ascertain, and *to be able to teach*, the truth respecting art; also knowing that this truth was *by time and labour* definitely ascertainable."—Prof. RUSKIN: *Modern Painters*, Vol. III.

"Thirdly, that TRUTHS OF COLOUR ARE THE LEAST IMPORTANT OF ALL TRUTHS."—Mr. RUSKIN, Prof. of Art: *Modern Painters*, Vol. I. Chap. V.:

"And that colour is indeed a most unimportant characteristic of objects, would be further evident on the slightest consideration. The colour of plants is constantly changing with the season . . . . but the nature and essence of the thing are independent of these changes. An oak is an oak, whether green with spring, or red with winter; a dahlia is a dahlia, whether it be yellow or crimson; and if some monster hunting florist should ever frighten the flower blue, still it will be a dahlia; but not so if the same arbitrary changes could be effected in its form. Let the roughness of the bark and the angles of the boughs be smoothed or diminished, and the oak ceases to be an oak; but let it retain its universal structure and outward form, and though its leaves grow white, or pink, or blue, or tri-colour, it would be a white oak, or a pink oak, or a republican oak, but an oak still."—JOHN RUSKIN, Esq., M.A., Teacher and Slade Prof. of Fine Arts: *Modern Painters*.

† "Canaletto, had he been a great painter, might have cast his reflections wherever he chose . . . . but he is a little and a bad painter."—Mr. RUSKIN, Art Critic.

"I repeat there is nothing but the work of Prout which is true, living, or right in its general impression, and nothing, therefore, so inexhaustively *agreeable*" (sic).—J. RUSKIN, Art Professor: *Modern Painters*.

‡ "Now it is evident that in Rembrandt's system, while the contrasts are not more right than with Veronese, the colours are all wrong from beginning to end."—JOHN RUSKIN, Art Authority.

REFLECTION:

"In conduct and in conversation,
It did a sinner good to hear
Him deal in ratiocination!"

he would have given his opinion of Mr. Whistler's work in the witness-box.

He had the highest appreciation for *completed pictures;*† and he required from an Artist that he should possess something more than a few flashes of genius!*

Mr. Ruskin entertaining those views, it was not wonderful that his attention should be attracted to Mr. Whistler's pictures. He subjected the pictures, if they chose,‡ to ridicule and contempt. Then Mr. Ruskin spoke of "the ill-educated§ conceit of the artist, so nearly approaching the action of imposture." If his pictures were mere extravagances, how could it redound to the credit of Mr. Whistler to send them to the Grosvenor Gallery to be exhibited? Some artistic gentleman from Manchester, Leeds, or Sheffield might perhaps be induced to buy one of the pictures because it was a Whistler, and what Mr. Ruskin meant was that he might better have remained in Manchester, Sheffield, or Leeds, with his money in his pocket. It was said that the term "ill-educated conceit" ought never to have been applied to Mr. Whistler, who had devoted the whole of his life to educating himself in Art;‖ but Mr. Ruskin's views¶ as to his success did not accord with those of Mr. Whistler. The libel complained of said also, "I never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face."

† "I was pleased by a little unpretending modern German picture at Dusseldorf, by Bosch, representing a boy carving a model of his sheep dog in wood."—J. RUSKIN: *Modern Painters.*

‡ "Vulgarity, dulness, or impiety will indeed always express themselves through art, in brown and gray, as in Rembrandt."—Prof. JOHN RUSKIN: *Modern Painters.*

* "I have just said that every class of rock, earth and cloud must be known by the painter with geologic and meteorologic accuracy.—Slade Prof. RUSKIN: *Modern Painters.*

§ "It is physically impossible, for instance, rightly to draw certain forms of the upper clouds with a brush; nothing will do it but the palette knife with loaded white after the blue ground is prepared."—JOHN RUSKIN, Prof. of Painting.

‖ "And thus we are guided, almost forced, by the laws of nature, to do right in art. Had granite been white and marble speckled (and why should this not have been, but by the definite Divine appointment for the good of man?), the huge figures of the Egyptian would have been as oppressive to the sight as cliffs of snow, and the Venus de Medicis would have looked like some exquisitely graceful species of frog."—Slade Professor JOHN RUSKIN.

¶ "The principal object in the foreground of Turner's 'Building of Carthage' is a group of children sailing toy boats. The exquisite choice of this incident . . . . is quite as appreciable when it is told, as when it is seen—it has nothing to do with the technicalities of painting; . . . . such a thought as this is something far above all art."—JOHN RUSKIN, Art Professor: *Modern Painters.*

REFLECTION:

"Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"

ing a pot of paint in the public's face." What was a coxcomb? He had looked the word up, and found that it came from the old idea of the licensed jester who wore a cap and bells with a cock's comb in it, who went about making jests for the amusement of his master and family. If that were the true definition, then Mr. Whistler should not complain, because his pictures had afforded a most amusing jest! *He did not know when so much amusement had been afforded to the *British Public as by Mr. Whistler's pictures.* He had now finished. Mr. Ruskin had lived a long life without being attacked, and no one had attempted to control his pen through the medium of a jury. Mr. Ruskin said, through him, as his counsel, that he did not retract one syllable of his criticism, believing it was right. Of course, if they found a verdict against Mr. Ruskin, he would have to cease writing,† but it would be an evil day for Art, in this country, when Mr. Ruskin would be prevented from indulging in legitimate and proper criticism, by pointing out what was beautiful and what was not.‡

Evidence was then called on behalf of the defendant. Witnesses for the defendant, Messrs. Edward Burne-Jones, Frith, and Tom Taylor.

Mr. EDWARD BURNE-JONES called.

Mr. BOWEN, by way of presenting him properly to

* "It is especially to be remembered that drawings of this simple character [Prout's and W. Hunt's] were made for these same middle classes, exclusively; and even for the second order of middle classes, more accurately expressed by the term 'bourgeoisie.' They gave an unquestionable tone of liberal-mindedness to a suburban villa, and were the cheerfullest possible decorations for a moderate sized breakfast parlour, opening on a nicely mown lawn." —JOHN RUSKIN, Art Professor: *Notes on S. Prout and W. Hunt.*

† "It seems to me, and seemed always probable, that I might have done much more good in some other way."—Prof. JOHN RUSKIN, Art Teacher: *Modern Painters*, Vol. V.

‡ "Give thorough examination to the wonderful painting, *as such*, in the great Veronese . . . . and then, for contrast with its reckless power, and for final image to be remembered of sweet Italian art in its earnestness . . . . the Beata Catherine Vigri's St. Ursula, ... I will only say in closing, as I said of the Vicar's picture in beginning, that it would be well if any of us could do such things nowadays — and more especially if our vicars and young ladies could."—JOHN RUSKIN, Prof. of Fine Art: *Guide to Principal Pictures, Academy of Fine Arts, Venice.*

the consideration of the Court, proceeded to read extracts of eulogistic appreciation of this artist from the defendant's own writings.

"Of the estimate which shall be formed of Mr. Jones's own work . . . . "His work, first, is simply the only art-work at present produced in England which will be received by the future as 'classic' in its kind—the best that has been or could be."—Prof. RUSKIN: *Fors Clavigera*, July 2, 1877.

The examination of witness then commenced; and in answer to Mr. BOWEN, Mr. JONES said: "I am a painter, and have devoted about twenty years to the study. I have painted various works, including the 'Days of Creation' and 'Venus's Mirror,' both of which were exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877. I have also exhibited 'Deferentia,' 'Fides,' 'St. George,' and 'Sybil.' I have one work, 'Merlin and Vivian,' now being exhibited in Paris. In my opinion complete finish ought to be the object of all artists. A picture ought not to fall short of what has been for ages considered complete finish.

Mr. BOWEN: "Do you see any art quality in that nocturne, Mr. Jones?"

Mr. JONES: "Yes . . . . I must speak the truth, you know" . . . . (*Emotion.*)

Mr. BOWEN: ! . . "Yes. Well, Mr. Jones, what quality do you see in it?"

Mr. JONES: "Colour. It has fine colour, and atmosphere."

Mr. BOWEN: "Ah. Well, do you consider detail and composition essential to a work of Art?"

Mr. JONES: "Most certainly I do."

Mr. BOWEN: "Then what detail and composition do you find in this nocturne?"

Mr. JONES: "Absolutely none." *

Mr. BOWEN: "Do you think two hundred guineas a large price for that picture?"

Mr. JONES: "Yes. When you think of the amount of earnest work done for a smaller sum."

Examination continued: "Does it show the finish of a complete work of art?"

"Not in any sense whatever. The picture representing a night scene on Battersea Bridge, is good in colour, but bewildering in form; and it has no composition and detail. A day or a day and a half seems a reasonable time within which to paint it. It shows no finish—it is simply a sketch. The nocturne in black and gold has not the merit of the other two pictures, and it would be impossible to call it a serious work of art. Mr. Whistler's picture is only one of the thousand failures to paint night. The picture is not worth two hundred guineas."

Mr. BOWEN here proposed to ask the witness to look at a picture of Titian,† in order to show what finish was.‡

Mr. SERJEANT PARRY objected.

Mr. BARON HUDDLESTON: "You will have to prove that it is a Titian."

Mr. BOWEN: "I shall be able to do that."

"The action of imagination of the highest power in Burne Jones, under the conditions of scholarship, of social beauty, and of social distress, which necessarily aid, thwart, and colour it in the nineteenth century, are alone in art,—unrivalled in their kind; and I *know* that these will be immortal, as the best things the mid-nineteenth century in England could do, in such true relations as it had, through all confusion, retained with the paternal and everlasting Art of the world."—JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.: *Fors Clavigera*, July 2, 1877.

† "I believe the world may see another Titian, and another Raffaelle, before it sees another Rubens."—Mr. RUSKIN.

REFLECTION

* There is a cunning condition of mind that *requires to know*. On the Stock Exchange this insures safe investment. In the painting trade this would induce certain picture-makers to cross the river at noon, in a boat, before negotiating a Nocturne, in order to make sure of detail on the bank, that honestly the purchaser might exact, and out of which he might have been tricked by the Night!

‡ . . . . "The Butcher's Dog, in the corner of Mr. Mulready's 'Butt,' displays, perhaps, the most wonderful, because the most dignified, finish . . . . and assuredly the most perfect unity of drawing and colour which the entire range of ancient and modern art can exhibit. Albert Durer is, indeed, the only rival who might be suggested."—JOHN RUSKIN, Slade Professor of Art: *Modern Painters*.

Mr. Baron Huddleston: "That can only be by repute. I do not want to raise a laugh, but there is a well-known case of 'an undoubted' Titian being purchased with a view to enabling students and others to find out how to produce his wonderful colours. With that object the picture was rubbed down, and they found a red surface, beneath which they thought was the secret, but on continuing the rubbing they discovered a full length portrait of George III. in uniform!"

The witness was then asked to look at the picture, and he said: "It is a portrait of Doge Andrea Gritti, and I believe it is a real Titian. It shows finish. It is a very perfect sample of the highest finish of ancient art.* The flesh is perfect, the modelling of the face is round and good. That is an 'arrangement in flesh and blood!'"

The witness having pointed out the excellences of that portrait, said: "I think Mr. Whistler had great powers at first, which he has not since justified. He has evaded the difficulties of his art, because the difficulty of an artist increases every day of his professional life."

Cross-examined: "What is the value of this picture of Titian?"—"That is a mere accident of the sale-room."

*. . . "I feel entitled to point out that the picture by Titian, produced in the case of Whistler *v.* Ruskin, is an early specimen of that master, and does not represent adequately the style and qualities which have obtained for him his great reputation—one obvious point of difference between this and his more mature work being the far greater amount of finish—I do not say completeness—exhibited in it . . and as the picture was brought forward with a view to inform the jury as to the nature of the work of the greatest painter, and more especially as to the

"Is it worth one thousand guineas?"—"It would be worth many thousands to me."

high finish introduced in it, it is evident that it was calculated to produce an erroneous impression on their minds, if indeed any one present at the inquiry can hold that those gentlemen were in any way fitted to understand the issues raised therein.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"A. MOORE.

"Nov. 28."

Extract of a letter to the Editor of the *Echo*.

Mr. FRITH was then examined: "I am an R.A.; and have devoted my life to painting. I am a member of the Academies of various countries. I am the author of the 'Railway Station,' 'Derby Day,' and 'Rake's Progress.' I have seen Mr. Whistler's pictures, and in my opinion they are not serious works of art. The nocturne in black and gold is not a serious work to me. I cannot see anything of the true representation of water and atmosphere in the painting of 'Battersea Bridge.' There is a pretty colour which pleases the eye, but there is nothing more. To my thinking, the description of moonlight is not true. The picture is not worth two hundred guineas. Composition and detail are most important matters in a picture. In our profession men of equal merit differ as to the character of a picture. One may blame, while another praises, a work. I have not exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery. I have read Mr. Ruskin's works."

"I was just a toss up whether I became an Artist or an Auctioneer."—W. P. FRITH, R.A.

REFLECTION:

He must have tossed up.

Mr. Frith here got down.

REFLECTION:

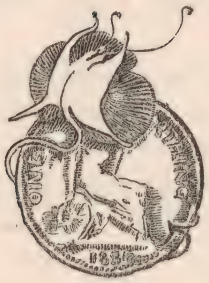
A decidedly honest man—I have not heard of him since.

Mr. Tom Taylor—Poor Law Commissioner, Editor of *Punch*, and so forth—and so forth :—"I am an art critic of long standing. I have been engaged in this capacity by the *Times*, and other journals, for the last twenty years. I edited the 'Life of Reynolds,' and 'Haydon.' I have *always* studied art. I have seen these pictures of Mr. Whistler's when they were exhibited at the Dudley and the Grosvenor Galleries. The 'Nocturne' in black and gold I do not think a serious work of art." The witness here took from the pockets of his overcoat copies of the *Times*, and with the permission of the Court, read again with unction his own criticism, to every word of which he said he still adhered. "All Mr. Whistler's work is unfinished. It is sketchy. He, no doubt, possesses artistic qualities, and he has got appreciation of qualities of tone, but he is not complete, and all his works are in the nature of sketching. I have expressed, and still adhere to the opinion, that these pictures only come 'one step nearer pictures than a delicately tinted wall-paper.'"

REFLECTION: To perceive in Ruskin's army Tom Taylor, his champion—whose opinion he prizes—Mr. Frith, his ideal—was gratifying. But to sit and look at Mr. Burne Jones, in common cause with Tom Taylor—whom he esteems, and Mr. Frith—whom he respects—conscientiously appraising the work of a *confrère*—was a privilege ! !

This ended the case for the defendant.

Verdict for plaintiff. Damages one farthing.



Professor Ruskin's Group

MY dear Sambourne—I know I shall be only charmed, as I always am, by your work, and if I am myself its subject, I shall only be flattered in addition.

The World, Dec. 11, 1878.

Punch in person sat upon me in the box; why should not the most subtle of his staff have a shot? Moreover, whatever delicacy and refinement Tom Taylor may still have left in his pocket (from which, in Court, he drew his ammunition) I doubt not he will urge you to use, that it may not be wasted. Meanwhile you must not throw away sentiment upon what you call "this trying time."

A pleasant *résumé* of the situation—in reply to Mr. Sambourne's expressed hope that his historical cartoon in *Punch* might not offend

To have brought about an "Arrangement in Frith, Jones, *Punch* and Ruskin, with a touch of Titian," is a joy! and in itself sufficient to satisfy even my craving for curious "combinations."—Ever yours,

Whistler v. Ruskin

ART & ART CRITICS

Chelsea, Dec. 1878.

Dedicated to

ALBERT MOORE

Whistler v. Ruskin: Art and Art Critics

THE *fin mot* and spirit of this matter seems to have been utterly missed, or perhaps willingly winked at, by the journals in their comments. Their correspondents have persistently, and not unnaturally as writers, seen nothing beyond the immediate case in law—viz., the difference between Mr. Ruskin and myself, culminating in the libel with a verdict for the plaintiff.

Now the war, of which the opening skirmish was fought the other day in Westminster, is really one between the brush and the pen; and involves literally, as the Attorney-General himself hinted, the absolute "raison d'être" of the critic. The cry, on their part, of "Il faut vivre," I most certainly meet, in this case, with the appropriate answer, "Je n'en vois pas la nécessité."

Far from me, at that stage of things, to go further into this discussion than I did, when, cross-examined

by Sir John Holker, I contented myself with the general answer, "that one might admit criticism when emanating from a man who had passed his whole life in the science which he attacks." The position of Mr. Ruskin as an art authority we left quite unassailed during the trial. To have said that Mr. Ruskin's pose among intelligent men, as other than a *littérateur* is false and ridiculous, would have been an invitation to the stake; and to be burnt alive, or stoned before the verdict, was not what I came into court for.

Over and over again did the Attorney-General cry out aloud, in the agony of his cause, "What is to become of painting if the critics withhold their lash?"

As well might he ask what is to become of mathematics under similar circumstances, were they possible. I maintain that two and two the mathematician would continue to make four, in spite of the whine of the amateur for three, or the cry of the critic for five. We are told that Mr. Ruskin has devoted his long life to art, and as a result—is "Slade Professor" at Oxford. In the same sentence, we have thus his position and its worth. It suffices not, Messieurs! a life passed among pictures makes not a painter—else the policeman in the National Gallery might assert himself. As well allege that he who lives in a

library must needs die a poet. Let not Mr. Ruskin flatter himself that more education makes the difference between himself and the policeman when both stand gazing in the Gallery.

There they might remain till the end of time; the one decently silent, the other saying, in good English, many high-sounding empty things, like the cracking of thorns under a pot—undismayed by the presence of the Masters with whose names he is sacrilegiously familiar; whose intentions he interprets, whose vices he discovers with the facility of the incapable, and whose virtues he descants upon with a verbosity and flow of language that would, could he hear it, give Titian the same shock of surprise that was Balaam's, when the first great critic proffered his opinion.

This one instance apart, where collapse was immediate, the creature Critic is of comparatively modern growth—and certainly, in perfect condition, of recent date. To his completeness go qualities evolved from the latest lightnesses of to-day—indeed, the *fine fleur* of his type is brought forth in Paris, and beside him the Englishman is but rough-hewn and blundering after all; though not unkindly should one say it, as reproaching him with inferiority resulting from chances neglected.

The truth is, as compared with his brother of

the Boulevards, the Briton was badly begun by nature.

To take himself seriously is the fate of the humbug at home, and destruction to the jaunty career of the art critic, whose essence of success lies in his strong sense of his ephemeral existence, and his consequent horror of *ennuyer*ing his world—in short, to perceive the joke of life is rarely given to our people, whilst it forms the mainspring of the Parisian's *savoir plaire*. The finesse of the Frenchman, acquired in long loafing and clever *café* cackle—the glib go and easy assurance of the *petit crevé*, combined with the *chic* of great habit—the brilliant *blague* of the ateliers—the aptitude of their *argot*—the fling of the *Figaro*, and the knack of short paragraphs, which allows him to print of a picture "C'est bien écrit!" and of a subject, "C'est bien dit!"—these are elements of an *ensemble* impossible in this island.

Still, we are "various" in our specimens, and a sense of progress is noticeable when we look about among them.

Indications of their period are perceptible, and curiously enough a similarity is suggested, by their work, between themselves and the vehicles we might fancy carrying them about to their livelihood.

Tough old Tom, the busy City 'Bus, with its heavy

jolting and many halts; its steady, sturdy, stodgy continuance on the same old much worn way, every turning known, and freshness unhoped for; its patient dreary dulness of daily duty to its cheap company—struggling on to its end, nevertheless, and pulling up at the Bank! with a flourish from the driver, and a joke from the cad at the door.

Then the contributors to the daily papers: so many hansoms bowling along that the moment may not be lost, and the *à propos* gone for ever. The one or two broughams solemnly rolling for reviews, while the lighter bicycle zigzags irresponsibly in among them for the happy Halfpennies.

What a commerce it all is, to be sure!

No sham in it either!—no "bigod nonsense!" they are all "doing good"—yes, they all do good to Art. Poor Art! what a sad state the slut is in, an these gentlemen shall help her. The artist alone, by the way, is to no purpose, and remains unconsulted; his work is explained and rectified without him, by the one who was never in it—but upon whom God, always good, though sometimes careless, has thrown away the knowledge refused to the author—poor devil!

The Attorney-General said, "There are some people who would do away with critics altogether."

I agree with him, and am of the irrationals he

points at—but let me be clearly understood—the *art* critic alone would I extinguish. That writers should destroy writings to the benefit of writing is reasonable. Who but they shall insist upon beauties of literature, and discard the demerits of their brother *littérateurs?* In their turn they will be destroyed by other writers, and the merry game goes on till truth prevail. Shall the painter then—I foresee the question—decide upon painting? Shall *he* be the critic and sole authority? Aggressive as is this supposition, I fear that, in the length of time, his assertion alone has established what even the gentlemen of the quill accept as the canons of art, and recognise as the masterpieces of work.

Let work, then, be received in silence, as it was in the days to which the penmen still point as an era when art was at its apogee. And here we come upon the oft-repeated apology of the critic for existing at all, and find how complete is his stultification. He brands himself as the necessary blister for the health of the painter, and writes that he may do good to his art. In the same ink he bemoans the decadence about him, and declares that the best work was done when he was not there to help it. No! let there be no critics! they are not a "necessary evil," but an evil quite unnecessary, though an evil certainly.

Harm they do, and not good.

Furnished as they are with the means of furthering their foolishness, they spread prejudice abroad; and through the papers, at their service, thousands are warned against the work they have yet to look upon.

And here one is tempted to go further, and show the crass idiocy and impertinence of those whose dicta are printed as law.

How he of the *Times* * has found Velasquez "slovenly in execution, poor in colour—being little but a combination of neutral greys and ugly in its forms"—how he grovelled in happiness over a Turner—that was no Turner at all, as Mr. Ruskin wrote to show—Ruskin! whom he has since defended. Ah! Messieurs, what our neighbours call "la malice des choses" was unthought of, and the sarcasm of fate was against you. How Gerard Dow's broom was an example for the young; and Canaletti and Paul Veronese are to be swept aside—doubtless with it. How Rembrandt is coarse, and Carlo Dolci noble—with more of this kind. But what does it matter?

* June 6, 1874.

"What does anything matter!" The farce will go on, and its solemnity adds to the fun.

Mediocrity flattered at acknowledging mediocrity,

and mistaking mystification for mastery, enters the fog of dilettantism, and, graduating connoisseur, ends its days in a bewilderment of bric-à-brac and Brummagem!

"Taste" has long been confounded with capacity, and accepted as sufficient qualification for the utterance of judgment in music, poetry, and painting. Art is joyously received as a matter of opinion; and that it should be based upon laws as rigid and defined as those of the known sciences, is a supposition no longer to be tolerated by modern cultivation. For whereas no polished member of society is at all affected at admitting himself neither engineer, mathematician, nor astronomer, and therefore remains willingly discreet and taciturn upon these subjects, still would he be highly offended were he supposed to have no voice in what is clearly to him a matter of "Taste"; and so he becomes of necessity the backer of the critic—the cause and result of his own ignorance and vanity! The fascination of this pose is too much for him, and he hails with delight its justification. Modesty and good sense are revolted at nothing, and the millennium of "Taste" sets in.

The whole scheme is simple: the galleries are to be thrown open on Sundays, and the public, dragged from their beer to the British Museum, are to delight

in the Elgin Marbles, and appreciate what the early Italians have done to elevate their thirsty souls! An inroad into the laboratory would be looked upon as an intrusion; but before the triumphs of Art, the expounder is at his ease, and points out the doctrine that Raphael's results are within the reach of any beholder, provided he enrol himself with Ruskin or hearken to Colvin in the provinces. The people are to be educated upon the broad basis of "Taste," forsooth, and it matters but little what "gentleman and scholar" undertake the task.

Eloquence alone shall guide them—and the readiest writer or wordiest talker is perforce their professor.

The Observatory at Greenwich under the direction of an Apothecary! The College of Physicians with Tennyson as President! and we know that madness is about. But a school of art with an accomplished *littérateur* at its head disturbs no one! and is actually what the world receives as rational, while Ruskin writes for pupils, and Colvin holds forth at Cambridge.

Still, quite alone stands Ruskin, whose writing is art, and whose art is unworthy his writing. To him and his example do we owe the outrage of proffered assistance from the unscientific—the meddling of the immodest—the intrusion of the garrulous. Art, that for ages has hewn its own history in marble, and

written its own comments on canvas, shall it suddenly stand still, and stammer, and wait for wisdom from the passer-by ?—for guidance from the hand that holds neither brush nor chisel ? Out upon the shallow conceit ! What greater sarcasm can Mr. Ruskin pass upon himself than that he preaches to young men what he cannot perform ! Why, unsatisfied with his own conscious power, should he choose to become the type of incompetence by talking for forty years of what he has never done !

Let him resign his present professorship, to fill the chair of Ethics at the university. As master of English literature, he has a right to his laurels, while, as the populariser of pictures he remains the Peter Parley of painting.

The Art Critic of the "Times"

"SANS rancune," by all means, my dear Whistler; but you should not have quoted from my article, of June 6th, 1874, on Velasquez, in such a way as to give exactly the opposite impression to that which the article, taken as a whole, conveys.

Mr. Tom Taylor's acknowledgment of presentation copy of Mr. Whistler's "Art and Art Critics," with "Sans rancune" inscribed upon fly-leaf by the author.

I appreciate and admire Velasquez as entirely, and allow me to say, as intelligently, as yourself. I have probably seen and studied more of his work than you have. And I maintain that the article you have garbled in your quotation gives a fair and adequate account of the picture it deals with—"*Las Meninas*"—and one which any artist who knows the picture would, in essentials, subscribe to.

The World, Jan. 15, 1879.

God help the artists if ever the criticism of pictures falls into the hands of painters! It would be a case of vivisection all round.

Your pamphlet is a very natural result of your late

disagreeable legal experiences, though not a very wise one.

If the critics are not better qualified to deal with the painters than the painter in your pamphlet shows himself qualified to deal with the critics, it will be a bad day for art when the hands that have been trained to the brush lay it aside for the pen.*

If you had read my article on Velasquez, I cannot but say that you have made an unfair use of it, in quoting a detached sentence, which, read with the context, bears exactly the opposite sense from that you have quoted it as bearing.

This is a bad "throw-off" in the critical line; whether it affect "*le premier littérateur venu*" or yours always,

TOM TAYLOR.

P.S.—*As your attack on my article is public, I reserve to myself the right of giving equal publicity to this letter.*

LAVENDER SWEEP,
Jan. 6, 1879.

The Position

DEAD for a ducat, dead! my dear Tom: and the rattle has reached me by post.

The World, Jan. 15, 1879.

"*Sans rancune*," say you? Bah! you scream unkind threats and die badly.

Why squabble over your little article? You *did* print what I quote, you know, Tom; and it is surely unimportant what more you may have written of the Master. That you should have written anything at all is your crime.

No; shrive your naughty soul, and give up Velasquez, and pass your last days properly in the Home Office.

Set your house in order with the Government for arrears of time and paper, and leave vengeance to the Lord, who will forgive my "garbling" Tom Taylor's writing.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Jan. 8, 1879.

Serious Sarcasm

PARDON me, my dear Whistler, for having taken you *au sérieux* even for a moment.

I ought to have remembered that your penning, like your painting, belongs to the region of "chaff." I will not forget it again; and meantime remain yours always,

TOM TAYLOR.

LAVENDER SWEEP,
Jan. 9, 1879.

Final

WHY, my dear old Tom, I never *was* serious with you, even when you were among us. Indeed, I killed you quite, as who should say, without seriousness, "A rat! A rat!" you know, rather cursorily.

The World, Jan. 15, 1879.

Chaff, Tom, as in your present state you are beginning to perceive, was your fate here, and doubtless will be throughout the eternity before you. With ages at your disposal, this truth will dimly dawn upon you; and as you look back upon this life, perchance many situations that you took *au sérieux* (art-critic, who knows? expounder of Velasquez, and what not) will explain themselves sadly—chaff! Go back!

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Jan. 10, 1879.

"*Balaam's Ass*"

MR. WHISTLER has written a discord in black and white. It is a strong saying, excellent in diction, broadly and boldly set down in slashing words. . . . . *Vanity Fair*, Jan. 11, 1879.

The point Mr. Whistler raises and enforces is that criticism of painting other than by painters is monstrous, and not to be tolerated. . . . . Mr. Ruskin's "high sounding empty things" would, he says, "give Titian the same shock of surprise that was Balaam's when the first great critic proffered his opinion." . . . . The inference . . . . is that all the world, competent and incompetent together, must receive the painter's work in silence, under pain of being classed with Balaam's ass. . . . .

If, finding himself ill received or ill understood, he has to say, "You cannot understand me," he must also say, "I did not understand myself and you, to whom I speak, sufficiently well to make you understand me."

There could be no better illustration of all this than

that Mr. Whistler has suggested of Balaam's ass. *For the Ass was right*, although, nay, because he was an ass. "What have I done unto thee," said he, "that thou hast smitten me these three times?" "Because thou hast mocked me," replies Balaam—Whistler; whereupon the Angel of the Lord rebukes him and says, "*The ass saw me*," so that Balaam is constrained to bow his head and fall flat on his face. And thus indeed it is. The ass sees the Angel of the Lord there where the wise prophet sees nothing, and, by her seeing, saves the life of the very master who, for reward, smites her grievously and wishes he had a sword that he might kill her.

Let Balaam not forget that after all he rides upon the ass, that she has served him well ever since she was his until this day, and that even now he is on his way with her to be promoted unto very great honour by the Princes of Balak. And let him remember that whatever can speak may at any moment have a word to say to him which it were best he should hear.

RASPER.

The Point acknowledged

Vanity Fair, Jan. 18, 1879.

WELL hit! my dear *Vanity*, and I find, on searching again, that historically you are right.

The fact, doubtless, explains the conviction of the race in their mission, but I fancy you will admit that this is the *only Ass on record* who ever *did* "see the Angel of the Lord!" and that we are past the age of miracles.

Yours always,

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Jan. 11, 1879.

Critic's Analysis

IN the "Symphony in White No. III." by Mr. Whistler there are many dainty varieties of tint, but it is not precisely a symphony in white. One lady has a yellowish dress and brown hair and a bit of blue ribbon, the other has a red fan, and there are flowers and green leaves. There is a girl in white on a white sofa, but even this girl has reddish hair; and of course there is the flesh colour of the complexions.

The Saturday Review, June 1, 1867. P. G. Hamerton.

The Critic's Mind Considered

HOW pleasing that such profound prattle should inevitably find its place in print! "Not precisely a symphony in white . . . . for there is a yellowish dress . . . . brown hair, etc. . . . . another with reddish hair . . . . and of course there is the flesh colour of the complexions."

Bon Dieu! did this wise person expect white hair and chalked faces? And does he then, in his astounding consequence, believe that a symphony in F contains no other note, but shall be a continued repetition of F, F, F.? . . . . Fool!

CHELSEA,
June 1867.

A Troubled One

The World, July 3, 1878.

THE "Season Number" of *Vanity Fair* contains . . . Mr. Whistler's etching of "St. James's Street" is sadly disappointing.

Full Absolution

The World July 10, 1878.

DEAR *World*—Atlas, overburdened with the world and its sins, may well be relieved from the weight of one wee error—a sort of last straw that bothers his back. The impression in *Vanity Fair* that disappoints him is not an etching at all, but a reproduction for that paper by some transfer process.

Atlas has the wisdom of ages, and need not grieve himself with mere matters of art. "Il n'est pas nécessaire que vous sachiez ces choses-là, mon révérend père!"

CHELSEA.

"Confidences" with an Editor

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HOUR."

SIR—I have read the intelligent remarks of your critic upon my pictures, and am happy to be able to remove, I think, the "melancholy" impression left upon his mind by the supposition that "the best works are not of recent date." Permit me to reassure him, for the paintings he speaks of in glowing terms —notably "the full-length portrait of a young girl," which he overwhelms me by comparing to Velasquez, as well as the two life-size portraits in black, "in which there is an almost entire negation of colour" (though I, who am, he says, a colourist, did not know it)—are my latest works, and but just completed.

May I still farther correct a misconception? The etchings and dry-points in the gallery do not form a complete set. There are only fifty exhibited, making about half the number I have executed.

Again, it was from no feeling that "my works were

not seen to advantage when placed in juxtaposition with those of an essentially different kind," that I "determined to have an exhibition of my own, where no discordant elements should distract the spectator's attention." It is true that occasionally it has been borne in upon my mind that those whose "works are of an essentially different kind," are unwilling to place mine in juxtaposition with their own.

My wish has been, though, to prove that the place in which works of art are shown may be made as free from "discordant elements which distract the spectators' attention" as the works themselves.

Marvelling greatly that the "principle" that has led me (in his eyes at least) to paint so that he speaks of me in the same breath with Velasquez, should be "founded on fallacy,"—I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

June 10, 1874.

Critics "Copy"

The World, Dec. 8, 1880.

AT the Gallery of the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street, an exhibition has been opened of the etchings of Venice, executed by Mr. Whistler. Exhibitions are sometimes of slender constitution nowadays. Mr. Whistler's etchings are twelve in number, of unimportant dimensions, and of the slightest workmanship. They convey a certain sense of distance and atmosphere, otherwise it cannot be said that they are of particular value or originality. They rather resemble vague first intentions, or memoranda for future use, than designs completely carried out. Probably every artist coming from Venice brings with him some such outlines as these in his sketch-books. Apparently, so far as his twelve etchings are to be considered as evidence in the matter, Venice has not deeply stirred either Mr. Whistler or his art.

A Proposal

ATLAS, *mon bon, méfiez-vous de vos gens!* Your art gentleman says that Mr. Whistler exhibits twelve etchings, "slight in execution and unimportant in size." Now the private assassin you keep, for us, need not be hampered by mere connoisseurship in the perpetration of his duty—therefore, *passe*, for the execution—but he should not compromise his master's reputation for brilliancy, and print things that he who runs may scoff at. *The World*, Dec. 29, 1880.

Seriously, then, my Atlas, an etching does not depend, for its importance, upon its size. "I am not arguing with you—I am telling you." As well speak of one of your own charming *mots* as unimportant in length!

Look to it, Atlas. Be severe with your man. Tell him his "job" should be "neatly done." I could cut my own throat better; and if need be, in case of his dismissal, I offer my services.

Meanwhile, yours joyously,

The Painter-Etcher Papers

"A Storm in an Æsthetic Teapot." *The Cuckoo*, April 11, 1881.

THE exhibition of etchings at the Hanover Gallery has been the occasion of one of those squabbles which amuse everybody — perhaps, even including the quarrellers themselves. Some etchings, exceedingly like Mr. Whistler's in manner, but signed "Frank Duveneck," were sent to the Painter-Etchers' Exhibition from Venice. The Painter-Etchers appear to have suspected for a moment that the works were really Mr. Whistler's; and, not desiring to be the victims of an easy hoax on the part of that gentleman, three of their members—Dr. Seymour Haden, Dr. Hamilton, and Mr. Legros—went to the Fine Art Society's Gallery, in New Bond Street, and asked one of the assistants there to show them some of Mr. Whistler's Venetian plates. From this assistant they learned that Mr. Whistler was under an arrangement to exhibit and sell his Venetian etchings only at the Fine Art Society's Gallery; but, even if these Painter-

Etchers really believed that "Frank Duveneck" was only another name for James Whistler, this information about the Fine Art Society's arrangement with him need not have shaken that belief, for the *nom de plume* might easily have been adopted with the concurrence of the society's leading spirits. Nor is it altogether certain that the Painter-Etchers did anything more than compare, for their own satisfaction as connoisseurs, the works of Mr. Whistler and "Frank Duveneck." The motive of their doing so may have been misunderstood by the Fine Art Society's assistant with whom they conferred.

Be that as it may, this assistant thought fit to repeat to Mr. Whistler what had passed, and also his own impressions as to the motive of the comparison and the inquiries which the Painter-Etchers had instituted. Whereupon Mr. Whistler has addressed a letter to Mr. Seymour Haden (who is, by the way, *his brother-in-law*), of which all that need be here said, is that it is extremely characteristic of Mr. Whistler.

Later

The Cuckoo, April 30, 1881.

SOME time ago I referred to a storm in an "æsthetic tea-pot" that was brewed and had burst in the Fine Art Society's Gallery, in Bond Street, in *re* Mr. Whistler's Venice Etchings. It seems to me that Mr. Seymour Haden, Mr. Legros, and Mr. Hamilton stumbled on an artistic mare's nest, that they rashly suggested that Mr. Whistler had been guilty of gross misfeasance in publishing etchings in an assumed name, and that they are now trying to get out of the scrape as best they may. This is, however, simply an opinion formed on perusal of the following documents, which I here present to my readers to judge of:

The following paragraph was some time ago sent to me with this letter:—

"If the Editor of the '*Cuckoo*' should see his way to the publication of the accompanying paragraph as it stands, twenty copies may

be sent, for circulation among the Council of the Society of Painter-Etchers, to Mr. Piker, newsvendor, Shepherd's Market."

"MR. WHISTLER AND THE PAINTER-ETCHERS.—Our explanation of this 'Storm in a Tea-pot' turns out to have been in the main correct. It appears that not only were the three gentlemen who went to the Fine Art Society's Gallery to look at Mr. Whistler's etchings guiltless of offence, but that the object of their going there was actually less to show that Mr. Whistler *was* than that he was *not* the author of the etchings which for a moment had puzzled them.

"For this, indeed, they seem to have given each other—in the presence of the blundering assistant, of course—three very distinct reasons.

"Firstly, that, as already stated, Mr. Seymour Haden had quite seriously written to Mr. Duveneck to buy the etchings.

"Secondly, that they at once accepted as satisfactory and sufficient the explanation given them of Mr. Whistler's obligations to the Fine Art Society; and, thirdly, though this count appears to have somehow slipped altogether out of the indictment—they were one and all of opinion that, taken all round, the Duveneck etchings were the *best of the two* (*sic*)!!!

"It is a pity a clever man like Mr. Whistler is yet not clever enough to see that while habitual public attacks on a *near relative* cannot fail to be, to the majority of people, unpalatable, they are likely to be, when directed against a brother etcher, even *suspecte*."

I did not at the time "see my way" to publishing the paragraph "as it stands," but, having subsequently received the following correspondence, I think it only right to give Mr. Piker's paragraph publicity, along with the letters subjoined:—

"The Fine Art Society,"
148 New Bond Street.

March 18, 1881.

"To Seymour Haden, Esq.—My dear Sir,—Mr. Whistler has called upon me respecting your visit here yesterday with Mr. Legros and Dr. Hamilton, the purport of which had been communicated to him by Mr. Brown." Letter from Mr. Huish to Mr. Haden.

"He is naturally indignant that, knowing, as you apparently did, that he was under an engagement not to publish for a certain time any etchings of Venice except those issued by us, you should suggest that they were his work, and had been sent in by him under a *nom de plume*."

"He considers that it is damaging to his reputation in connection with us, and he requests me to write and ask you whether you adhere to your opinion or retract it."

"Believe me to remain, yours faithfully,

"MARCUS B. HUISH."

"38 Hertford Street, Mayfair, W.
March 21, 1881.

Letter from Mr. Haden to Mr. Huish.

"To M. Huish, Esq.—Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of a letter from you, dated the 18th inst., in which you first impute to me an opinion which I have never

held, and then call me to account for that opinion. To a peremptory letter so framed, I shall not be misunderstood if I simply decline to plead."

"Meanwhile, that I was *not* of opinion that the etchings in our hands were by Mr. Whistler is conclusively proved by the fact that on the day after their reception I had written to Mr. Duveneck to arrange for their purchase!"

"Be this, however, as it may, I can have no hesitation on the part both of myself and of the gentlemen engaged with me in a necessary duty, in expressing our sincere regret if, by a mistaken representation of our proceedings, Mr. Whistler has been led to believe that we had said or implied anything which could give him pain or reflect in any way on his reputation either with you or your directors."

"Faithfully yours,

"F. SEYMOUR HADEN."

"ARTS CLUB,"
HANOVER SQUARE.

Letter from J. M'N. Whistler to Mr. Haden. March 20, 1881.

"To Seymour Haden, Esq.—Sir—Mr. Huish handed me your letter of the 21st inst., since when I have waited in vain for the true version that, I doubted not, would follow the 'mistaken representation' you regret I should have received."

"Now I must ask that you will, if possible, without further delay, give me a thorough explanation of your visit to the Fine Art Society's Gallery on Friday evening, the 17th inst.,—involving, as it did, a discussion of my private affairs."

"Did you, accompanied by M. Legros and Dr. Hamilton, call at the Fine Art Society's rooms on that date, and ask to see Mr. Whistler's etchings?"

"Did you there proceed to make a careful and minute examination of these, and then ask Mr. Brown if Mr. Whistler had done other etchings of Venice?"

"Upon his answer in the affirmative, did you ask Mr. Brown if any of the other plates were large ones, and, notably, whether Mr. Whistler had done any other plate of the subject called 'The Riva'?"

"Did you ask to see the early states of Mr. Whistler's etchings?"

"Did you say to Mr. Brown, 'Now, is not Mr. Whistler under an engagement with the Fine Art Society to publish no Venice etchings for a year?' or words to that effect? and upon Mr. Brown's assurance that such was the case, did you request him to go with you to the Hanover Gallery?"

"Did you there produce for his inspection three large Venice etchings, and among them the 'Riva' subject?"

"Did you then incite Mr. Brown to detect, in these works, the hand of Mr. Whistler?"

"Did you point out details of execution which, in your opinion, betrayed Mr. Whistler's manner?"

"Did you say, 'You see these etchings are signed "Frank Duveneck," and I have written to that name and address for their purchase, but I don't believe in the existence of such a person,' or words to that effect?"

"If this be not so,

"Why did you take Mr. Brown over to the Hanover Gallery?"

"Why did you show him Mr. Duveneck's Venice etchings?"

"Why did you question him about my engagement with the Fine Art Society?"

"Is it officially, as the Painter-Etchers' President, that you pry about the town?"

"Does the Committee sanction your suggestions? and have you permitted yourself these 'proceedings' with the full knowledge and approval of the 'dozen or more distinguished men seated in serious council,' as described by yourself in the *Pall Mall Gazette?*"

"Of what nature, pray, is the 'necessary duty' that has led two medical men and a Slade Professor to fail as connoisseurs, and blunder as detectives?"

"'Vat shall de honest man do in my closet? Dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet!'"

"Copies of this correspondence will be sent to members of your Committee."

To this last letter, Mr. Seymour Haden has not as yet sent any answer, and here the matter rests. As requested, we have sent Mr. Piker the copies he requires for distribution.

THE EDITOR OF THE "CUCKOO."

La Suite

"ARTS CLUB,"

May 10, 1881.

TO the Committee of the Painter-Etchers' Society:

Gentlemen,—I have hitherto, in vain, written to Sir William Drake, as secretary of the Painter-Etchers' Society, and feeling convinced that his elaborate silence cannot possibly be the expression of any intended discourtesy on the part of the Committee, as a body, but that it would rather indicate that they had not been consulted in the matter at all, I now address myself to you, and beg that you will kindly inform me whether the Committee, as represented by their officers, endorse the late acts of their President, or whether they intend taking any steps towards refusing to share the shame and ridicule that have accrued from certain "proceedings" described by Mr. Haden as a "necessary duty," in the exercise

Letter to the Committee of "Painter-Etchers' Society."

of which he was officially engaged in conjunction with Dr. Hamilton and M. Legros.

That you may clearly see how current the matter has become, I have the honour, Gentlemen, to send you herewith, for your serious consideration, extracts from the daily press, and thus, as you will read, carry out myself the first intention of a certain speculative Piker, newsvendor, Shepherd's Market, who had purposed circulating among you "twenty copies" of the enclosed literary venture—curtailed, it is true, to the original "Piker paragraph," and unaccompanied by the Piker twenty-penny prospect; the printing of which may—who knows?—have caused a wavering on the part of Piker, and have left you deprived of his labour after all.

Piker offers matter with authority—and here I would point out the *close proximity of Shepherd's Market to Hertford Street, Mayfair!*—most suggestive is such contiguity. The newsvendor's stall and the doctor's office within hail of each other!

Surely I may, without indiscretion, congratulate the President upon Piker's English and also upon the Pecksniffian whine about the "brother-in-law"—rather telling in its way—but shallow! shallow!—for after all, Gentlemen, a brother-in-law is *not* a connection calling for sentiment—in the abstract,

rather an intruder than "a near relation"—indeed, "near relation" is mere swagger!

Meanwhile, the insinuation of jealousy of the "brother-etcher" is, as Piker puts it, "*suspecte*"—very!—and modest!—and transparent!

To the last paper I have added the cutting from the former *Cuckoo* (Piker's earlier effort) so that you have the occasion of perceiving how the progressive Piker party have gained in courage—until, in direct contradiction to their first anxiety and hesitation, we reach the final *overwhelming certainty* of the three representative gentlemen, whose visit to the Fine Art Society's rooms, it would *now* appear, was absolutely to prove to the "blundering assistant" that some etchings he had never seen, and, consequently never had questioned;—of the very existence of which, in short, he was utterly unconscious,—were by a Mr. Duveneck, of whom he had never heard, and *not* by Mr. Whistler!—a fact that in his whole life he had never been in a position to dispute—and of which *the three Painter-Etchers themselves were the only people* who had ever had any doubt!

Really, they either doubted Duveneck, or they didn't doubt Duveneck!—Now, if the Piker party didn't doubt Duveneck, who the devil did the Piker party doubt? And why, may I ask, does Mr. Haden,

two days after the disastrous blunder in Bond Street, *volunteer* the following note of explanation to Mr. Brown, the assistant?—

(COPY.)

"38 HERTFORD STREET, MAYFAIR, W.
March 19, 1881.

"To Ernest Brown, Esq.—Dear Sir,—We know all about Mr. Frank Duveneck, and are delighted to have his etchings.—Yours faithfully,"

"F. SEYMOUR HADEN."

It will be remembered that the little expedition to the Fine Art Society's Gallery took place on *Thursday evening, the 17th* of March. On Friday, the 18th, Mr. Huish wrote to Mr. Haden demanding an explanation; and on *Saturday, the 19th*, this over-diplomatic and criminating note was sent to Mr. Brown,—altogether unasked for, and curiously difficult to excuse!—"Methinks, he doth protest too much!"

Further comment I believe to be unnecessary.

I refer you, Gentlemen, to my letter of March 29th, which Mr. Haden has never been able to answer—and merely point out that, the "blundering assistant" was the only one who did not blunder at all—since he alone, refrained from folly, and, notwithstanding all exhortation, steadily refused, in the presence of

cunning connoisseurs, to mistake the work of one man for that of another.

I have, Gentlemen, the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

J. McNeill Whistler.

May 18, 1881.

To the Committee of
the Painter-Etchers' Society.

May I, without impertinence, ask what really does constitute the "Painter-Etcher" "all round," as Piker has it?—for, of these three gentlemen who have so markedly distinguished themselves in that character, two certainly are not painters—and one doesn't etch!

A Correction

A SUPPOSITITIOUS conversation in *Punch* brought about the following interchange of telegrams:—

The World, Nov. 14, 1883.

From Oscar Wilde, Exeter, to J. McNeill Whistler, Tite Street.—*Punch* too ridiculous—when you and I are together we never talk about anything except ourselves.

From Whistler, Tite Street, to Oscar Wilde, Exeter. —No, no, Oscar, you forget—when you and I are together, we never talk about anything except me.

A Warning

REFLECTION:
"A foolish man's foot is soon in his neighbour's house; but a man of experience is ashamed of him."

The World, June 1, 1881.

MY dear James,—I see from a weekly paper that your late residence, the White House, in Tite Street, is now occupied by Mr. Harry Quilter, "the excellent art critic and writer on art," or words to that effect. This is the great man who has succeeded Mr. Tom Taylor on the *Times*, and whose vagaries in art criticism you and I, my dear James, have previously noticed. . .

ATLAS.

Naïf Enfant

The Times, May 2, 1881.

CLOSE to this is another portrait of extreme interest, and, though of another kind, it is not inappropriately near Mr. Hunt's work. This is Mr. John Ruskin, painted by Mr. Herkomer. It is difficult to dissociate this picture, as regards the merit of its painting, from the interest which attaches to it as being the first oil portrait we have ever seen of our great art critic. . . . . The picture remains a singularly fine one, and is, in our opinion, Mr. Herkomer's best portrait.

A Straight Tip

"NE pas confondre intelligence avec gendarmes"—but surely, dear Atlas, when the art critic of the *Times*, suffering possibly from chronic catarrh, is wafted in at the Grosvenor without guide or compass, and cannot by mere sense of smell distinguish between oil and water colour, he ought, like Mark Twain, "to inquire."

The World, May 18, 1881.

Had he asked the guardian or the fireman in the gallery, either might have told him not to say that one of the chief interests of Mr. Herkomer's large water-colour drawing of Mr. Ruskin "attaches to it as being *the first oil portrait* we have ever seen of our great art critic"! Adieu.

An Eager Authority

The World, Feb. 9, 1881.

MR. WHISTLER knows how to defend himself so perkily that it is a pleasure to attack him. I hasten, therefore, with joy, to submit to you, dear Atlas, who are growing so very clever at your languages, the following crotchets and quavers—shall I call them? for Mr. Whistler is just now full of "notes"—in American-Italian; they are from his delightful brown-paper catalogue. To begin with, "Santa Margharita" is wrong; it must be either Margarita or Margherita; the other is impossible Italian. Then who or what is "San Giovanni *Apostolo et Evangelistœ*"? Does the sprightly and shrill McNeill mean this for Latin? And is the "Café Orientale" intended to be French or Italian? It has an *e* too many for French, and an *f* too few for Italian. "Piazetta," furthermore, does duty for "Piazzetta." Finally I give up "Campo Sta. Martin." I don't know what that can be. The Italian Calendar has a San Martino and a Santa Martina, but Sta. Martin is very curious. The catalogue is exceedingly short, but a few of the names are right.

An Admission

TOUCHÉ!—and my compliments to your "Correspondent," Atlas, *chéri*—far from me to justify spelling of my own! But who could possibly have supposed an orthographer loose! Evidently too "ung vieulx qui a moult roulé en Palestine et aultres lieux!" *The World*, Feb. 16, 1881.

What it is to be prepared, though! Atlas, *mon pauvre ami*, you know the story of the witness who, when asked how far he stood from the spot where the deed was done, answered unhesitatingly—"Sixty-three feet seven inches!" "How, sir," cried the prosecuting lawyer—"how can you possibly pretend to such accuracy?" "Well," returned the man in the box, "you see I thought some d——d fool would be sure to ask me, and so I measured."

'Arry in the Grosvenor

ATLAS—In spite of the Kyrle Society, I don't appeal to the middle classes; for I read in the *Times* that 'Arry won't have me. I am ranked with the *caviare* of his betters, and add not to the relish of his winkles and tea.

Also, why troubles he about many things?

But, alas! as is aptly remarked in one of the weekly papers, "'Arry has taken to going to the Grosvenor;" and "ce n'est pas tout que d'être honnête," he says, lightly paraphrasing Alfred de Musset, "il faut être joli garçon!" *The World*, May 17, 1882.

And so he blooms into an æsthete of his own order. To have seen him, O my wise Atlas, was my privilege and my misery; for he stood under one of my own "harmonies"—already with difficulty gasping its gentle breath—himself an amazing "arrangement" in strong mustard-and-cress, with bird's-eye belcher of

Reckitt's blue; and then and there destroyed absolutely, unintentionally, and once for all, my year's work!

Atlas, shall these things be?

Encouragement

TO OSCAR ON HIS "TOUR."

The World, Feb. 15, 1882.

OSCAR—We, of Tite Street and Beaufort Gardens, joy in your triumphs and delight in your success; but we are of opinion that, with the exception of your epigrams, you talk like "S—— C—— in the provinces"; and that, with the exception of your knee-breeches, you dress like 'Arry Quilter.

CHELSEA.

A Remonstrance

ATLAS, how could you!

I know you carry the *World* on your back, and am not surprised that my note to Oscar, on its way, should have fallen from your shoulders into your dainty fingers; but why present it in the state of puzzle?

The World, Feb. 22, 1882.

Besides, your caution is one-sided and unfair; for if you print S—— C——, why not A—— Q——? Why not X Y Z at once?

And how unlike me! Instead of the frank recklessness which has unfortunately become a characteristic, I am, for the first time, disguised in careful timidity, and discharge my insinuating initials from the ambush of innuendo.

My dear Atlas, if I may not always call a spade a spade, may I not call a Slade Professor, Sidney Colvin?

Propositions

I. THAT in Art, it is criminal to go beyond the means used in its exercise.

II. That the space to be covered should always be in proper relation to the means used for covering it.

III. That in etching, the means used, or instrument employed, being the finest possible point, the space to be covered should be small in proportion.

IV. That all attempts to overstep the limits insisted upon by such proportion, are inartistic thoroughly, and tend to reveal the paucity of the means used, instead of concealing the same, as required by Art in its refinement.

V. That the huge plate, therefore, is an offence—its undertaking an unbecoming display of determination and ignorance—its accomplishment a triumph of unthinking earnestness and uncontrolled energy—endowments of the "duffer."

VI. That the custom of "Remarque" emanates from

With compliments to the Committee of the "Hoboken" Etching Club upon the occasion of receiving an invitation to compete in an etching tournay whose first condition was that the plate should be at least two feet by three.

the amateur, and reflects his foolish facility beyond the border of his picture, thus testifying to his unscientific sense of its dignity.

VII. That it is odious.

VIII. That, indeed, there should be no margin on the proof to receive such "Remarque."

IX. That the habit of margin, again, dates from the outsider, and continues with the collector in his unreasoning connoisseurship—taking curious pleasure in the quantity of paper.

X. That the picture ending where the frame begins, and, in the case of the etching, the white mount, being inevitably, because of its colour, the frame, the picture thus extends itself irrelevantly through the margin to the mount.

XI. That wit of this kind would leave six inches of raw canvas between the painting and its gold frame, to delight the purchaser with the quality of the cloth.

An Unanswered Letter

PRÉ CHARMOY, AUTUN,
SAÔNE ET LOIRE, FRANCE,
Sept. 13, 1867.

SIR—I am at present engaged upon a book on etching and should be glad to give a full account of what you have done, but find a difficulty, which is that, although I have seen many of your etchings, I have not fully and fairly studied them. I wonder whether you would object to lend me a set of proofs for a few weeks. As the book is already advanced, I should be glad of an early reply. My opinion of your work is, *on the whole, so favourable that your reputation could only gain* by your affording me the opportunity of speaking of your work at length.

I remain, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

P. G. HAMERTON.

JAMES WHISTLER, Esq.

Inconsequences

JAMES WHISTLER is of American extraction, and studied painting in France. As a student he was capricious and irregular, and did not leave the impression amongst his fellow-pupils that his future would be in any way distinguished . . . . his artistic education seems to have been mainly acquired by private and independent study. . . . .

The "book on etching."

Mr. Whistler seems to be aware that etchings are usually sought as much for their rarity as their excellence, and to have determined that his own plates shall be rare already.

I have been told that, if application is made by letter to Mr. Whistler for a set of his etchings, he may, perhaps, if he chooses to answer the letter, do the applicant the favour to let him have a copy for about the price of a good horse. . . . .

Whistler's etchings are not generally remarkable for poetical feeling. . . . .

P. G. HAMERTON,*
Etching and Etchers.

* "If beauty were the only province of art, neither painters nor etchers would find anything to occupy them in the foul stream that washes the London wharfs"—P. G. HAMERTON, *Etching and Etchers.*

Uncovered Opinions

MR. WHISTLER'S famous "Woman in White" is amongst the rejected pictures. . . . . The hangers must have thought her particularly ugly, for they have given her a sort of place of honour, before an opening through which all pass, so that nobody misses her.

I watched several parties, to see the impression the "Woman in White" made on them. They all stopped instantly, struck with amazement. This for two or three seconds; then they always looked at each other and laughed.

Here, for once, I have the happiness to be quite of the popular way of thinking.

*P. G. HAMERTON,
Fine Arts Quarterly.

* "Corot is one of the most celebrated landscape painters in France. The first impression of an Englishman, on looking at his works, is that they are the sketches of an amateur; it is difficult at first sight to consider them the serious performances of an artist. . . . . I *understand Corot now*, and think his reputation, if not well deserved, at least easily accounted for. . . . . Corot must be an early riser."—P. G. HAMERTON, *Fine Arts Quarterly.*

* "Doré (Gustave Paul) . . . . He is a great and marvellous genius—a poet such as a nation produces once in a thousand years. He is the most imaginative, the profoundest, the most productive poet that has ever sprung from the French race."—P. G. HAMERTON, *Fine Arts Quarterly.*

* "Daubigny (Charles François).—If landscape can be satisfactorily painted without either drawing or colour—Daubigny is the man to do it."—P. G. HAMERTON, *Fine Arts Quarterly.*

* "M. Courbet is looked upon as the representative of Realism in France. The truth is that Edouard Frère, the Bonheurs, and many others are to the full as realistic as Courbet but they produce beautiful pictures. . . . . It is difficult to speak of Courbet, without losing patience. Everything he touches becomes unpleasant."—P. G. HAMERTON, *Fine Arts Quarterly.*

The Fate of an Anecdote

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—In *Scribner's Magazine* for this month there appears an article on Mr. Seymour Haden, the eminent surgeon etcher, by a Mr. Hamerton, and in this article I have stumbled upon a curious statement concerning, strangely enough, my own affairs, offered pleasantly in the disguise of an anecdote habitually "narrated" by the Doctor himself, and printed effectively in inverted commas, as here shown: *New York Tribune*, Sept. 12, 1880.

. . . . "A parallel anecdote is narrated by Mr. Haden: 'The most exquisite series of plates which Whistler ever did—his sixteen Thames subjects—were originally printed by a steel-plate printer, and so badly that the owner thought the plates were worn out, and sold them for a small sum in comparison to their real worth. The purchaser took them to Goulding, the best printer of etchings in England, and it was found that they were not only perfect, but that they pro-

duced impressions which had never before been approached even by Delatre.'"

Putting gently aside the question of these plates being superior to all previous or subsequent work, and dealing merely with facts, I have to say that they were *not* "originally printed by a steel-plate printer"; that the impressions were *not* so bad that the owner thought the plates worn out; and, flattering as is the supposition that they were sold for a small sum in comparison to their real worth, I am obliged to reject even this palatable assertion, as I received for the plates the price that I asked, knowing full well their exact condition.

Instead of the "steel-plate printer," Delatre, then at his prime, had himself printed these etchings—a fact which, amusingly enough, Mr. Haden admits further on, in direct contradiction to his first broad statement. Moreover, I had myself pulled proofs of them all; indeed, one in the set of sixteen plates, a drypoint, called "The Forge" (for by the way they were not all of the Thames), I alone printed. When the plates left my hands they were *not* "taken to Goulding," who at that moment had, I fancy, barely begun his career as "the best printer of etchings in England" (and a capital printer he certainly is); and it was *not* "found that they produced impressions never before ap-

proached even by Delatre"—here we have the contradiction alluded to—no! this theatrical denouement I must also put aside with sorrow.

The plates were brought out by Messrs. Ellis, who had them printed by some one in London, whose work was certainly not to be compared to that of Delatre, whom I should undoubtedly have recommended; so that *it was only long after the sale had been completed and the plates had ceased to be in my possession*, that inferior impressions were produced.

The understanding on my part with those publishers was that the plates were to be destroyed after one hundred impressions had been taken, but very recently they reappeared, and were sold to their present possessors, who *did* take them to Mr. Goulding. And here I am obliged to explain away the last element of astonishment, for Mr. Goulding naturally found the etchings in their original perfect condition simply because I had had them steeled in their full bloom when I had satisfied myself by my own proofs.

Goulding's impressions of these plates are very excellent, but to say they were quite unapproached by Delatre is not only needless exaggeration, but an unkindness to Mr. Goulding.

Surely there must be some misunderstanding between Mr. Haden and his biographer—a misdeal of

data—an accident with the anecdotes—because no one was more keenly alive to all relating to these plates and their various states than Mr. Haden himself, whose strong sense of the importance of printing was acquired while watching the progress of these same plates, and the previous French set, as they were proved by me and printed by Delatre, to whom I introduced him.

Far from me to spoil a good story; but for the life of me I cannot see what any sympathizing *raconteur* will regret in the destruction of this mere jumble of statistics that Mr. Hamerton calls "Mr. Haden's anecdote."

VENICE, Aug. 16, 1880.

[*In Excelsis*

In Excelsis

MR. HAMERTON presents his compliments to Mr. Whistler, and begs to inform him that he has read Mr. Whistler's very unbecoming and improper letter in the *New York Tribune.*

Mr. Hamerton in his article in *Scribner's Monthly* simply quoted a passage from one of Mr. Haden's lectures on Etching, published in Cassell's *Magazine of Art;* consequently Mr. Hamerton did not offer matter to his readers under any disguise whatever. Mr. Hamerton has answered Mr. Whistler's letter in the same journal in which it appeared.

PRÉ CHARMOY, AUTUN, SAÔNE ET LOIRE,
Sept. 28, 1880.

A Suspicion

IT is possibly too much to expect—upon the principle of "trumps not turning up twice"—but Mr. Whistler does hope that Mr. Hamerton's letter to the *New York Tribune* will be as funny as his note to Mr. Whistler, which has just been forwarded from London.

VENICE, Oct. 7.
CAFÉ FLORIAN, PLACE SAN MARC.

Pardon! Is Mr. Whistler right in supposing, from the droll little irritation shown in Mr. Hamerton's note, that Mr. Hamerton is perhaps—another "Art Critic"?

Conviction

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—A friend in America has sent me the letter from Mr. Whistler which refers to my article in *Scribner* on Mr. Haden's etchings. The letter begins as follows:

New York Tribune, Oct. 11, 1880.

In *Scribner's Magazine* for this month there appears an article on Mr. Seymour Haden, the eminent surgeon etcher by a Mr. Hamerton, and in this article I have stumbled upon a curious statement concerning — strangely enough — my own affairs, offered pleasantly in the disguise of an anecdote habitually 'narrated' by the Doctor himself, and printed effectively in inverted commas, as here shown.

Here Mr. Whistler accuses me of disguising something which I chose to tell, as if it came from Mr. Haden, by printing it in inverted commas. The statement is "offered pleasantly in the disguise of an anecdote," and "printed effectively in inverted

commas." I used inverted commas because it is the custom to do so when making a quotation. I quoted Mr. Haden's own words from one of his lectures on etching, and they will be found printed, as I quoted them, in Cassell's *Magazine of Art*. I beg to be permitted to observe that a writer who quotes a passage, as I did, in perfect good faith, ought not to be accused of offering matter in disguise. There was no disguise about it. Mr. Haden's words may be compared with my quotation. Again, to prevent any possible inaccuracy, a proof of the article in *Scribner* was sent to Mr. Haden before it was published.* It is scarcely necessary that I should allude to Mr. Whistler's studied discourtesy in calling me "a Mr. Hamerton." It does me no harm, but it is a breach of ordinary good manners in speaking of a well-known writer!

REFLECTION:
* Queen's evidence.

REFLECTION:
Q. E. D.

Yours obediently,

P. G. HAMERTON.

AUTUN, Sept. 29, 1880.

MR. WHISTLER

AND

HIS CRITICS

A CATALOGUE

"Out of their own mouths shall ye judge them.'

"Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?"

Etchings and Dry-points

"His pictures form a dangerous precedent."

VENICE.

"Another crop of Mr. Whistler's little jokes."

Truth.

1.—MURANO—GLASS FURNACE.

"Criticism is powerless here."—*Knowledge.*

2.—DOORWAY AND VINE.

"He must not attempt to palm off his deficiencies upon us as manifestations of power."

Daily Telegraph.

3.—WHEELWRIGHT.

"Their charm depends not at all upon the technical qualities so striking in his earlier work."

St. James's Gazette.

4.—SAN BIAGIO.

"So far removed from any accepted canons of art as to be beyond the understanding of an ordinary mortal."—*Observer.*

5.—BEAD STRINGERS.

"'Impressionistes,' *and of these the various schools are represented by* Mr. Whistler, Mr. Spencer Stanhope, Mr. Walter Crane, and Mr. Strudwick."

REFLECTION:
"Et voilà comme on écrit l'histoire."

6.—FISH SHOP.

"Those who feel painfully the absence in these works of any feeling for the past glories of Venice."

'Arry in the Spectator.

"Whistler is eminently vulgar."—*Glasgow Herald.*

7.—TURKEYS.

"They say very little to the mind."—*F. Wedmore.*

"It is the artist's pleasure to have them there, and we can't help it."—*Edinburgh Courant.*

8.—NOCTURNE RIVA.

"The Nocturne is intended to convey an impression of night."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

"The subject did not admit of any drawing."

P. G. Hamerton.

"We have seen a great many representations of Venetian skies, but never saw one before consisting of brown smoke with clots of ink in diagonal lines."

9.—FRUIT STALL.

"The historical or poetical associations of cities have little charm for Mr. Whistler and no place in his art."

10.—SAN GIORGIO.

"An artist of incomplete performance."

F. Wedmore.

11.—THE DYER.

"By having as little to do as possible with tone and light and shade, Mr. Whistler evades great difficulties."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

"All those theoretical principles of the art, of which we have heard so much from Messrs. Haden, Hamerton (?) * and Lalauze, are abandoned."

St. James's Gazette.

* "Calling me 'a Mr. Hamerton' does me no harm—but it is a breach of ordinary good manners in speaking of a well-known writer."

Yours obediently,
P. G. HAMERTON.

Sept. 29, 1880.
To the Editor of the *New York Tribune.*

12.—NOCTURNE PALACES.

"Pictures in darkness are contradictions in terms."
Literary World.

13.—THE DOORWAY.

"There is seldom in his Etchings any large arrangement of light and shade."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

"Short, scratchy lines."—*St. James's Gazette.*

"The architectural ornaments and the interlacing bars of the gratings are suggested rather than drawn."
St. James's Gazette.

"Amateur prodige."—*Saturday Review.*

14.—LONG LAGOON.

"We think that London fogs and the muddy old Thames supply Mr. Whistler's needle with subjects more congenial than do the Venetian palaces and lagoons."—*Daily News.*

15.—TEMPLE.

"The work does not feel much."—*Times.*

16.—LITTLE SALUTE.—(DRY-POINT.)

"As for the lucubrations of Mr. Whistler, they come like shadows and will so depart, *and it is unnecessary to disquiet one's self about them.*"

17.—THE BRIDGE.

"These works have been done with a swiftness and dash that precludes anything like care and finish."

"These Etchings of Mr. Whistler's are nothing like so satisfactory as his earlier Chelsea ones; they neither convey the idea of space nor have they the delicacy of handling and treatment which we see in those."

"He looked at Venice never in detail."

F. Wedmore.

18.—WOOL CARDERS.

"They have a merit of their own, and I do not wish to understand it." *—*F. Wedmore.*

* Mr. Wedmore is the lucky discoverer of the following:—"Vigour and exquisiteness are denied—are they not?—even to a Velasquez"!

19.—UPRIGHT VENICE.

"Little to recommend them save the eccentricity of their titles."

20.—LITTLE VENICE.

"The Little Venice is one of the slightest of the series."—*St. James's Gazette.*

"In the Little Venice and the Little Lagoon Mr. Whistler has attempted to convey impressions by lines far too few for his purposes."—*Daily News.*

"Our river is naturally full of effects in *black and white and bistre*. Venetian skies and marbles have colour you cannot suggest with a point and some printer's ink."—*Daily News.*

"It is not the Venice of a maiden's fancies."—*'Arry.*

21.—LITTLE COURT.

"Merely technical triumphs."—*Standard.*

22.—REGENT'S QUADRANT.

"There may be a few who find genius in insanity."

23.—LOBSTER POTS.

"So little in them."*—*P. G. Hamerton.*

* The same Critic holds: "The Thames is beautiful from Maidenhead to Kew, but not from Battersea to Sheerness."

24.—RIVA No. 2.

"In all his former Etchings he was careful to give a strong foundation of firm drawing. In these plates, however, he has cast aside this painstaking method."

St. James's Gazette.

25.—ISLANDS.

"An artist who has never mastered the subtleties of accurate form."*—*F. Wedmore.*

* Elsewhere Mr. Wedmore is inspired to say—"The true collector must *gradually* and *painfully* acquire the eye to judge of the impression."

REFLECTION:

This is possibly the process through which the preacher is passing.

26.—THE LITTLE LAGOON.

"Well, little new came of it, in etching; nothing new that was beautiful."—*F. Wedmore.*

27.—NOCTURNE SHIPPING.

"This Archimago of the iconographic aoraton, or graphiology of the Hidden."—*Daily Telegraph.*

"Amazing!"

"Popularity is the only insult that has not yet been offered to Mr. Whistler."—*Oscar Wilde.*

28.—TWO DOORWAYS.

"It is trying to any sketch without tone to be hung upon a wall as these have been."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

29.—OLD WOMEN.

"He is never literary."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

30.—RIVA.

"He took from London to Venice his happy fashion of suggesting lapping water."—*F. Wedmore.*

REFLECTION: Like Eno's Fruit Salt or the "Anti-mal-de-Mer."

"Even such a well-worn subject as the Riva degli Schiavoni is made original (?) by being taken from a high point of view, and looked at lengthwise, instead of from the canal."

31.—DRURY LANE.

"In Mr. Whistler's productions one might safely say that there is no culture."—*Athenæum.*

32.—THE BALCONY.

"His colour is subversive."—*Russian Press.*

33.—ALDERNEY STREET.

"The best art may be produced with trouble."

*F. Wedmore.**

* "I am not a Mede nor a Persian."—F. WEDMORE.

34.—THE SMITHY.

"They produce a disappointing impression."

"His Etchings seem weak when framed." *

P. G. Hamerton.

* Mr. Hamerton does also say: "Indifference to beauty is however compatible with splendid success in etching, as the career of Rembrandt proved."—*Etching and Etchers.*

35.—STABLES.

"An unpleasing thing, and framed in Mr. Whistler's odd fashion."—*City Press.*

36.—THE MAST.

"The Mast and the Little Mast are dependent for much of their interest, on the drawing of festoons of cord hanging from unequal heights."

P. G. Hamerton.

REFLECTION:

At the service of critics of unequal sizes.

37.—TRAGHETTO.

"The artist's present principles seem to deny him any effective chiaroscuro."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

"Mr. Whistler's figure drawings, generally defective and always incomplete."

REFLECTION:
"Sometimes generally always."

38.—FISHING BOAT.

"Subjects unimportant in themselves."

P. G. Hamerton.

39.—PONTE PIOVAN.

"Want of variety in the handling."

St. James's Gazette.

40.—GARDEN.

"An art which is happier in the gloom of a doorway than in the glow of the sunshine, and turns with a pleasant blindness from whatsoever in Nature or Man is of perfect beauty or noble thought."—*'Arry.*

41.—THE RIALTO.

"Mr. Whistler has etched too much for his reputation."—*F. Wedmore.*

Scampering caprice."—*S. Colvin.*

"Mr. Whistler's drawing, which is sometimes that of a very slovenly master."

REFLECTION:
This Critic, it is true, is a Slade Professor.

42.—LONG VENICE.

"After all, there are certain accepted canons about what constitutes good drawing, good colour, and good painting; and when an artist deliberately sets himself to ignore or violate all of these, it is desirable that his work should not be classed with that of ordinary artists."—*'Arry.*

43.—NOCTURNE SALUTE.

"The utter absence, as far as my eye * may be trusted, of gradation."—*F. Wedmore.*

"There are many things in a painter's art which even a photographer cannot understand."

Laudatory notice in Provincial Press.

44.—FURNACE NOCTURNE.

"There is no moral element in his chiaroscuro."

Richmond Eagle.

45.—PIAZETTA.

"Whistler does not take much pains with his work."

New York Paper.

"A sort of transatlantic impudence in his cleverness."

"His pictures do not claim to be accurate."

46.—THE LITTLE MAST.

"Form and line are of little account to him."

47.—QUIET CANAL.

"Herr Whistler stellt ganz wunderbare Productionen aus, die auf Gesetze der Form und der Farbe gegründet scheinen, die dem Uneingeweihten unverständlich sind."—*Wiener Presse.*

"This new manner of Mr. Whistler's is no improvement upon that which helped him to win his fame in this field of art."

48.—PALACES.

"The absence, seemingly, of any power of drawing the forms of water."*—*F. Wedmore.*

* See No. 30, *The Riva.*

"He has never, so far as we know, attempted to transfer to copper any of the more ambitious works of the architect."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

"He has been content to show us what his eyes can see, and not what his hand can do."

St. James's Gazette.

49.—SALUTE DAWN.

"Too sensational."—*Athenæum.*

"Pushing a single artistic principle to the verge of affectation."—*Sidney Colvin.*

50.—BEGGARS.

"In the character of humanity he has not time to be interested."—*Standard.*

"General absence of tone."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

51.—LAGOON : NOON.

"Years ago James Whistler was a person of high promise."—*F. Wedmore.*

"What the art of Mr. Whistler yields is a tertium quid."*—*Sidney Colvin.*

REFLECTION :
* The quid of sweet and bitter fancy.

"All of which gems, I am sincerely thankful to say, I cannot appreciate."

"As we have hinted, the series does not represent any Venice that we much care to remember; for who wants to remember the degradation of what has been noble, the foulness of what has been fair?"

*'Arry * in the "Times."*

**REFLECTION :*
The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them because he knoweth not how to go to the City.

"Disastrous failures."—*F. Wedmore.*

"Failures that are complete and failures that are partial."—*F. Wedmore.*

"A publicity rarely bestowed upon failures at all."

F. Wedmore, Nineteenth Century.

"Voilà ce que l'on dit de moi
Dans la Gazette de Hollande."

"Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us. We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness."

"We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noonday as in the night."

"We roar all like bears."

Taking the Bait

The Academy, Feb. 24, 1883.

BY the simple process of applying snippets of published sentences to works of art to which the original comments were never meant to have reference, and sometimes, too, by lively misquotation—as when a writer who "did not wish to understate" Mr. Whistler's merit is made to say he "did not wish to understand" it, Mr. Whistler has counted on good-humouredly confounding criticism. He has entertained but not persuaded; and if his literary efforts with the scissors and the paste-pot might be taken with any seriousness we should have to rebuke him for his feat. But we are far from doing so. He desired, it seems, to say that he and Velasquez were both above criticism. An artist in literature would have said it in fewer words; but indulgence may fairly be granted to the less assured methods of an amateur in authorship.

F. WEDMORE.

An Apology

ATLAS—There are those, they tell me, who have the approval of the people—and live! For them the *succès d'estime;* for me, O Atlas, the *succès d'exécration* —the only tribute possible from the Mob to the Master! This I have now nobly achieved. *Glissons!* In the hour of my triumph let me not neglect my ambulance.

The World, Feb. 28, 1883.

Mr. Frederick Wedmore—a critic—one of the wounded—complains that by dexterously substituting "understand" for "understate," I have dealt unfairly by him, and wrongly rendered his writing. Let me hasten to acknowledge the error, and apologise. My carelessness is culpable, and the misprint without excuse; for naturally I have all along known, and the typographer should have been duly warned, that with Mr. Wedmore, as with his brethren, it is always a matter of understating, and not at all one of understanding.

Quant aux autres—well, with the exception of "'Arry," who really is dead, they will recover. Scalped and disfigured, they are not mortally hurt; and—would you believe it?—possessed with an infinite capacity for continuing, they have already returned, nothing doubting, to their limited literature, of which I have exhausted the stock.—Yours, *en passant*,

CHELSEA.

[" *Jeux Innocents*"

"Jeux Innocents" in Tite Street

The World, Dec 26, 1883.

MR. WHISTLER'S final breakfast of the year was given on Sunday last. The hospitable master has fresh wonders in store for his friends in the new year; for, not content with treating his next-door critic after the manner that Portuguese sailors treat the Apostle Judas at Easter-tide, he is said to have perfected a new instrument of torture. This invention is of the nature of a camera obscura, whereby, by a crafty "arrangement" of reflectors, he promises to display in his own studio, to his friends, "'Arry at the White House," under all the appropriate circumstances that might be expected of a "Celebrity at Home."

ATLAS.

A Line from the Land's End

DELIGHTFUL! Atlas—I have read here, to the idle miners—culture in their manners curiously, at this season, blended with intoxication—your brilliant and graphic description of 'Arry at the other end of my arrangement in telescopic lenses. *The World*, Jan. 2, 1884.

The sensitive sons of the Cornish caves, by instinct refined, revel in the writhing of the resurrected 'Arry.

Our natures are evidently of the same dainty brutality. Cruelty to the critic after demise, is a revelation, and the story of 'Arry pursued with post-mortem, and, for Sunday demonstration, kept by galvanism from his grave, is to them most fascinating.

I have, my sympathetic Atlas, the success that might have been Edgar Poe's, could he have read to such an audience the horrible "Case of Mr. Waldemar."

My invention and machinery, by the way, these warm-hearted people believe to be something after the fashion of their own sluice-boxes—and I dare not undeceive them.

Atlas, *je te la souhaite bonne et heureuse!*

St. Ives, Cornwall,
Dec. 27.

The Easy Expert

ATLAS—They have sent me the *Spectator*—a paper upon which our late 'Arry lingered to the last as art critic. In its columns I find a correspondent calling aloud for our kind intervention. Present me, brave Atlas, to the editor, that I may say to him:

The World, Jan. 30, 1884.

"GOOD SIR,—'Your Reviewer' is doubtless my unburied 'Arry. Why, then, should 'his mistaking a photogravure reproduction of a pen-and-ink drawing by Samuel Palmer for a finished etching by the same hand' seem, 'to say the least of it, astounding'?

"Not at all! By this sort of thing was he known among us, poor chap—and so was he our fresh gladness and continued surprise."

"Did I not make historical his enchanting encounter with Mr. Herkomer's water-colour drawing of Mr. Ruskin at the Grosvenor, which he described as the 'first oil portrait we have of the great master'? Amazing that, if you like!

"Do not all remember how we leaped for joy at the reading of it?"

"Even Atlas himself laughed aloud, and, handicapped as he is with the World, and weighted with wisdom, danced upon his plinth, a slow measure of reckless acquiescence, as I set down in the chronicles of all time that 'Arry, 'unable, by mere sense of smell, to distinguish between oil and water-colour, might at least have inquired; and that either the fireman or the guardian in the Gallery could have told him not to blunder in the *Times*.'"

"But no, he never would ask—he liked his pot-shots at things; it used to give a sort of sporting interest to his speculations upon pictures. And so he was ever obstinate—or any one at the Fine Art Society would have told him the difference between an etching and a photograph.—I am, good sir, yours, etc."

Atlas, *à bientôt.*

St. Ives, Cornwall,
Jan. 25, 1884.

Propositions—No. 2

A PICTURE is finished when all trace of the means used to bring about the end has disappeared.

To say of a picture, as is often said in its praise, that it shows great and earnest labour, is to say that it is incomplete and unfit for view.

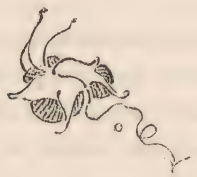
Industry in Art is a necessity—not a virtue—and any evidence of the same, in the production, is a blemish, not a quality; a proof, not of achievement, but of absolutely insufficient work, for work alone will efface the footsteps of work.

The work of the master reeks not of the sweat of the brow—suggests no effort—and is finished from its beginning.

The completed task of perseverance only, has never been begun, and will remain unfinished to eternity—a monument of goodwill and foolishness.

"There is one that laboureth, and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind."

The masterpiece should appear as the flower to the painter—perfect in its bud as in its bloom—with no reason to explain its presence—no mission to fulfil—a joy to the artist—a delusion to the philanthropist—a puzzle to the botanist—an accident of sentiment and alliteration to the literary man.



[*A Hint*

A Hint

The World.
Feb. 17, 1886.

PLEASE to take note, my dear Mr. James McN. W., that your "dearest foe," 'Arry, is a candidate for the Slade Chair of Art in the University of Cambridge! This is said to be the age of testimonials. A few words from you, my dear James, addressed to the distinguished trustees, could not fail to give 'Arry a lift.

ATLAS.

A Distinction

ATLAS, you provoke me! The wisdom of ages means but little—I have said it. *Faut être "dans le mouvement,"* you dear old thing, or you are absolutely out of it!

The World, Feb. 24, 1886.

You are misled, and mistake mere fact for the fiction of history, which is truth—and instructs—and is beautiful.

Now, in truth, 'Arry is dead—very dead.

Did I not, from between your shoulders, sally forth and slay him?—thereby instructing—and making history—and avenging the beautiful.

If within the distant Aïden, you can't descry, "with sorrow laden," the tiny soul of 'Arry, it is because you no longer read your own small print, my Atlas! and the microbes of Eternity escape you.

Moreover, are not these things written in the chronicles of Chelsea, adown whose Embankment I still, Achilles-like, do drag the body of an afternoon?

This practice has doubtless completed the confusion of the wearied ones of Slade—and they of the Schools, accustomed to the culture of Colvin, whose polished scalp I with difficulty collected, ceasing to distinguish between the quick and the dead, will probably prop up our late 'Arry as professor, long to remain undetected in the Chair!

Atlas, *tais-toi!*—Let us not interfere!

A Document

ATLAS—I have come upon the posthumous paper of 'Arry—his certificate of character, and printed pretension to the Professorship of Slade—and O! the shame of it—and the indiscretion of it!

Read, Atlas, and seek in your past for a parallel: *The World*, March 24, 1886.

"To the Electors of the Slade Professor of Fine Art "for the University of Cambridge.—My Lord and "Gentlemen,—I beg to submit my name as a candidate "for the Slade Professorship, and enclose herewith a "few testimonials. . . I have also received favourable "letters from the following gentlemen . . . Alma-"Tadema, R.A., Marcus Stone, R.A., Briton Rivière, "R.A., John Brett, A.R.A., . . . and others."

What! is the Immaculate impure?—and shall the Academy have coquetted with the unclean?

Had Alma the classic aught in common with this 'Arry of commerce?

Believe him not, Atlas!

O Alma ! O Ichabod ! forgive us the thought of it !

Surely also the pots of " the Forty " do boil before the Lord, and the flames of the chosen were unfanned by the feather of 'Arry's goose-quill.

Again :

" My experience in art matters has been briefly as " follows :

" I have worked at the subject continually in Italy, " having for that purpose travelled and stayed in that " country—at least a dozen times. I have also painted " in France, Germany, and Belgium, in which last- " mentioned country I was in a portrait painter's " studio."—(A portrait by 'Arry !)

" There are several pictures of mine being exhibited " in London at the present time." (! ! !)

" I have also executed a good deal of distemper. . . .

" I have also travelled for a year in the East." ('Arry in the East ! !)

" I have had, as a lecturer upon Art, considerable " experience—at working men's clubs— . . . and at " the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke's College for men, " women, and children.

" For the last ten years I have written *every article* " *upon art* which has appeared in the *Spectator* news- " paper "—a confession, Atlas, clearly a confession !

" In 1880, I wrote a critical life of Giotto "—he did

indeed, Atlas!—I saw it—a book in blue—his own, and Reckitt's—all bold with brazen letters:

"GIOTTO BY 'ARRY"

—"of which two editions were published"—bless him —and then I killed him!

and, "I am, Gentlemen,

"Your most obedient servant,

"'ARRY, M.A.

"Trin. Coll. Camb., *Esquire*."

The pride of it!

Sacrilege

O ATLAS! What of the "Society for the Preservation of Beautiful Buildings"?

Upon the Alterations of the "White House."

Where *is* Ruskin? and what do Morris and Sir William Drake?

The World, Oct. 17, 1883.

For, behold! beside the Thames, the work of desecration continues, and the "White House" swarms with the mason of contract.

The architectural *galbe* that was the joy of the few, and the bedazement of "the Board," crumbles beneath the pick, as did the north side of St. Mark's, and history is wiped from the face of Chelsea.

Shall no one interfere? Shall the interloper, even after his death, prevail?

Shall 'Arry, whom I have hewn down, still live among us by outrage of this kind, and impose his memory upon our pavement by the public perpetration of his posthumous philistinism?

Shall the birthplace of art become the tomb of its parasite in Tite Street?

See to it, Atlas! lest, when Time, the healer of all the wounds I have inflicted, shall for me have exacted those honours the prophet may not expect while alive, and the inevitable blue disc, imbedded in the walls, shall proclaim that "Here once dwelt" the gentle Master of all that is flippant and fine in Art, some anxious student, reading, fall out with Providence in his vain effort to reconcile such joyous reputation with the dank and hopeless appearance of this "model lodging," bequeathed to the people by the arrogance of 'Arry.

The Red Rag

WHY should not I call my works "symphonies," "arrangements," "harmonies," and "nocturnes"? I know that many good people think my nomenclature funny and myself "eccentric." Yes, "eccentric" is the adjective they find for me.

"*Mr. Whistler's Cheyne Walk.*" *The World*, May 22, 1878.

The vast majority of English folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which it may be supposed to tell.

My picture of a "Harmony in Grey and Gold" is an illustration of my meaning—a snow scene with a single black figure and a lighted tavern. I care nothing for the past, present, or future of the black figure, placed there because the black was wanted at that spot. All that I know is that my combination of grey and gold is the basis of the picture. Now this is precisely what my friends cannot grasp.

They say, "Why not call it 'Trotty Veck,' and sell it for a round harmony of golden guineas?"—naïvely acknowledging that, without baptism, there is no . . . . market!

But even commercially this stocking of your shop with the goods of another would be indecent—custom alone has made it dignified. Not even the popularity of Dickens should be invoked to lend an adventitious aid to art of another kind from his. I should hold it a vulgar and meretricious trick to excite people about Trotty Veck when, if they really could care for pictorial art at all, they would know that the picture should have its own merit, and not depend upon dramatic, or legendary, or local interest.

As music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight, and the subject-matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of colour.

The great musicians knew this. Beethoven and the rest wrote music—simply music; symphony in this key, concerto or sonata in that.

On F or G they constructed celestial harmonies—as harmonies—as combinations, evolved from the chords of F or G and their minor correlatives.

This is pure music as distinguished from airs—commonplace and vulgar in themselves, but interesting from their associations, as, for instance, "Yankee Doodle," or "Partant pour la Syrie."

Art should be independent of all clap-trap—should stand alone, and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and

the like. All these have no kind of concern with it; and that is why I insist on calling my works "arrangements" and "harmonies."

Take the picture of my mother, exhibited at the Royal Academy as an "Arrangement in Grey and Black." Now that is what it is. To me it is interesting as a picture of my mother; but what can or ought the public to care about the identity of the portrait?

The imitator is a poor kind of creature. If the man who paints only the tree, or flower, or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this: in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features; in arrangement of colours to treat a flower as his key, not as his model.

This is now understood indifferently well—at least by dressmakers. In every costume you see attention is paid to the key-note of colour which runs through the composition, as the chant of the Anabaptists through the *Prophète*, or the Huguenots' hymn in the opera of that name.

A Rebuke

NO Birmingham election, no Chamberlain speech, no *Reynolds* or *Dispatch* article, could bring the aristocracy more strongly into ridicule and contempt than does the coarsely coloured cartoon of "Newmarket" accompanying the winter number of *Vanity Fair*. From it one learns that the Dukes, Duchesses, and turf persons generally, frequenting the Heath, are a set of blob-headed stumpy dwarfs. . . . .

The World, Dec. 9, 1885.

ATLAS.

"*Les points sur les i*"

I AGREE with you, O Atlas of ages, that completeness is a reason for ceasing to exist; but even indignation might be less vague than is your righteous anger at *Vanity's* Christmas cartoon. Surely you might have helped the people, who scarcely distinguish between the original and impudent imitation, to know that this faded leaf is not from the book of Carlo Pellegrini, the master who has taught them all—that they can never learn?

The World, Dec. 16, 1885.

MR. WHISTLER'S

"TEN O'CLOCK"

London, 1888

Delivered in London
Feb. 20, 1885

At Cambridge
March 24

At Oxford
April 30

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It is with great hesitation and much misgiving that I appear before you, in the character of The Preacher.

If timidity be at all allied to the virtue modesty, and can find favour in your eyes, I pray you, for the sake of that virtue, accord me your utmost indulgence.

I would plead for my want of habit, did it not seem preposterous, judging from precedent, that aught save the most efficient effrontery could be ever expected in connection with my subject—for I will not conceal from you that I mean to talk about Art. Yes, Art—that has of late become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table.

Art is upon the Town!—to be chucked under the chin by the passing gallant—to be enticed within the gates of the householder—to be coaxed into company, as a proof of culture and refinement.

If familiarity can breed contempt, certainly Art—or what is currently taken for it—has been brought to its lowest stage of intimacy.

The people have been harassed with Art in every guise, and vexed with many methods as to its endurance. They have been told how they shall love Art, and live with it. Their homes have been invaded, their walls covered with paper, their very dress taken to task—until, roused at last, bewildered and filled with the doubts and discomforts of senseless suggestion, they resent such intrusion, and cast forth the false prophets, who have brought the very name of the beautiful into disrepute, and derision upon themselves.

Alas! ladies and gentlemen, Art has been maligned. She has naught in common with such practices. She is a goddess of dainty thought—reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, purposing in no way to better others.

She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only—having no desire to teach—seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high priest Rembrandt, when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks.

As did Tintoret and Paul Veronese, among the Venetians, while not halting to change the brocaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens.

As did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose Infantas, clad in inæsthetic hoops, are, as works of Art, of the same quality as the Elgin marbles.

No reformers were these great men—no improvers of the way of others! Their productions alone were their occupation, and, filled with the poetry of their science, they required not to alter their surroundings —for, as the laws of their Art were revealed to them they saw, in the development of their work, that real beauty which, to them, was as much a matter of certainty and triumph as is to the astronomer the verification of the result, foreseen with the light given to him alone. In all this, their world was completely severed from that of their fellow-creatures with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry ; and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves.

Humanity takes the place of Art, and God's creations are excused by their usefulness. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and, before a work of Art, it is asked: "What good shall it do?"

Hence it is that nobility of action, in this life, is hopelessly linked with the merit of the work that

portrays it; and thus the people have acquired the habit of looking, as who should say, not *at* a picture, but *through* it, at some human fact, that shall, or shall not, from a social point of view, better their mental or moral state. So we have come to hear of the painting that elevates, and of the duty of the painter—of the picture that is full of thought, and of the panel that merely decorates.

A favourite faith, dear to those who teach, is that certain periods were especially artistic, and that nations, readily named, were notably lovers of Art.

So we are told that the Greeks were, as a people, worshippers of the beautiful, and that in the fifteenth century Art was engrained in the multitude.

That the great masters lived in common understanding with their patrons—that the early Italians were artists—all—and that the demand for the lovely thing produced it.

That we, of to-day, in gross contrast to this Arcadian purity, call for the ungainly, and obtain the ugly.

That, could we but change our habits and climate —were we willing to wander in groves—could we be

roasted out of broadcloth—were we to do without haste, and journey without speed, we should again *require* the spoon of Queen Anne, and pick at our peas with the fork of two prongs. And so, for the flock, little hamlets grow near Hammersmith, and the steam horse is scorned.

Useless! quite hopeless and false is the effort!—built upon fable, and all because "a wise man has uttered a vain thing and filled his belly with the East wind."

Listen! There never was an artistic period.

There never was an Art-loving nation.

In the beginning, man went forth each day—some to do battle, some to the chase; others, again, to dig and to delve in the field—all that they might gain and live, or lose and die. Until there was found among them one, differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd.

This man, who took no joy in the ways of his brethren—who cared not for conquest, and fretted in the field—this designer of quaint patterns—this deviser of the beautiful—who perceived in Nature about him curious curvings, as faces are seen in the fire—this dreamer apart, was the first artist.

And when, from the field and from afar, there came back the people, they took the gourd—and drank from out of it.

And presently there came to this man another—and, in time, others—of like nature, chosen by the Gods—and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned, from the moistened earth, forms resembling the gourd. And with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of Nature, and the first vase was born, in beautiful proportion.

And the toilers tilled, and were athirst; and the heroes returned from fresh victories, to rejoice and to feast; and all drank alike from the artists' goblets, fashioned cunningly, taking no note the while of the craftsman's pride, and understanding not his glory in his work; drinking at the cup, not from choice, not from a consciousness that it was beautiful, but because, forsooth, there was none other!

And time, with more state, brought more capacity for luxury, and it became well that men should dwell in large houses, and rest upon couches, and eat at tables; whereupon the artist, with his artificers, built palaces, and filled them with furniture, beautiful in proportion and lovely to look upon.

And the people lived in marvels of art—and ate and

drank out of masterpieces—for there was nothing else to eat and to drink out of, and no bad building to live in; no article of daily life, of luxury, or of necessity, that had not been handed down from the design of the master, and made by his workmen.

And the people questioned not, *and had nothing to say in the matter.*

So Greece was in its splendour, and Art reigned supreme—by force of fact, not by election—and there was no meddling from the outsider. The mighty warrior would no more have ventured to offer a design for the temple of Pallas Athene than would the sacred poet have proffered a plan for constructing the catapult.

And the Amateur was unknown—and the Dilettante undreamed of!

And history wrote on, and conquest accompanied civilisation, and Art spread, or rather its products were carried by the victors among the vanquished from one country to another. And the customs of cultivation covered the face of the earth, so that all peoples continued to use what *the artist alone produced.*

And centuries passed in this using, and the world was flooded with all that was beautiful, until there

arose a new class, who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham.

Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw.

The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist, and what was born of the million went back to them, and charmed them, for it was after their own heart; and the great and the small, the statesman and the slave, took to themselves the abomination that was tendered, and preferred it—and have lived with it ever since!

And the artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and the huckster took his place.

And now the heroes filled from the jugs and drank from the bowls—with understanding—noting the glare of their new bravery, and taking pride in its worth.

And the people—this time—had much to say in the matter—and all were satisfied. And Birmingham and Manchester arose in their might—and Art was relegated to the curiosity shop.

Nature contains the elements, in colour and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music.

But the artist is born to pick, and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the result may be beautiful—as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he bring forth from chaos glorious harmony.

To say to the painter, that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano.

That Nature is always right, is an assertion, artistically, as untrue, as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted. Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might almost be said that Nature is usually wrong: that is to say, the condition of things that shall bring about the perfection of harmony worthy a picture is rare, and not common at all.

This would seem, to even the most intelligent, a doctrine almost blasphemous. So incorporated with our education has the supposed aphorism become, that its belief is held to be part of our moral being, and the words themselves have, in our ear, the ring of religion. Still, seldom does Nature succeed in producing a picture.

The sun blares, the wind blows from the east, the sky is bereft of cloud, and without, all is of iron. The windows of the Crystal Palace are seen from

all points of London. The holiday-maker rejoices in the glorious day, and the painter turns aside to shut his eyes.

How little this is understood, and how dutifully the casual in Nature is accepted as sublime, may be gathered from the unlimited admiration daily produced by a very foolish sunset.

The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the traveller on the top. The desire to see, for the sake of seeing, is, with the mass, alone the one to be gratified, hence the delight in detail.

And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairy-land is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand, as they have ceased to see, and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master—her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.

To him her secrets are unfolded, to him her lessons

have become gradually clear. He looks at her flower, not with the enlarging lens, that he may gather facts for the botanist, but with the light of the one who sees in her choice selection of brilliant tones and delicate tints, suggestions of future harmonies.

He does not confine himself to purposeless copying, without thought, each blade of grass, as commended by the inconsequent, but, in the long curve of the narrow leaf, corrected by the straight tall stem, he learns how grace is wedded to dignity, how strength enhances sweetness, that elegance shall be the result.

In the citron wing of the pale butterfly, with its dainty spots of orange, he sees before him the stately halls of fair gold, with their slender saffron pillars, and is taught how the delicate drawing high upon the walls shall be traced in tender tones of orpiment, and repeated by the base in notes of graver hue.

In all that is dainty and lovable he finds hints for his own combinations, and *thus* is Nature ever his resource and always at his service, and to him is naught refused.

Through his brain, as through the last alembic, is distilled the refined essence of that thought which began with the Gods, and which they left him to carry out.

Set apart by them to complete their works, he produces that wondrous thing called the masterpiece, which surpasses in perfection all that they have contrived in what is called Nature; and the Gods stand by and marvel, and perceive how far away more beautiful is the Venus of Melos than was their own Eve.

For some time past, the unattached writer has become the middleman in this matter of Art, and his influence, while it has widened the gulf between the people and the painter, has brought about the most complete misunderstanding as to the aim of the picture.

For him a picture is more or less a hieroglyph or symbol of story. Apart from a few technical terms, for the display of which he finds an occasion, the work is considered absolutely from a literary point of view; indeed, from what other can he consider it? And in his essays he deals with it as with a novel—a history—or an anecdote. He fails entirely and most naturally to see its excellences, or demerits—artistic—and so degrades Art, by supposing it a method of bringing about a literary climax.

It thus, in his hands, becomes merely a means of perpetrating something further, and its mission is made a secondary one, even as a means is second to an end.

The thoughts emphasised, noble or other, are inevitably attached to the incident, and become more or less noble, according to the eloquence or mental quality of the writer, who looks the while, with disdain, upon what he holds as "mere execution"—a matter belonging, he believes, to the training of the schools, and the reward of assiduity. So that, as he goes on with his translation from canvas to paper, the work becomes his own. He finds poetry where he would feel it were he himself transcribing the event, invention in the intricacy of the *mise en scène*, and noble philosophy in some detail of philanthropy, courage, modesty, or virtue, suggested to him by the occurrence.

All this might be brought before him, and his imagination be appealed to, by a very poor picture—indeed, I might safely say that it generally is.

Meanwhile, the *painter's* poetry is quite lost to him—the amazing invention that shall have put form and colour into such perfect harmony, that exquisiteness is the result, he is without understanding—the nobility of thought, that shall have given the

artist's dignity to the whole, says to him absolutely nothing.

So that his praises are published, for virtues we would blush to possess—while the great qualities, that distinguish the one work from the thousand, that make of the masterpiece the thing of beauty that it is —have never been seen at all.

That this is so, we can make sure of, by looking back at old reviews upon past exhibitions, and reading the flatteries lavished upon men who have since been forgotten altogether—but, upon whose works, the language has been exhausted, in rhapsodies—that left nothing for the National Gallery.

A curious matter, in its effect upon the judgment of these gentlemen, is the accepted vocabulary of poetic symbolism, that helps them, by habit, in dealing with Nature: a mountain, to them, is synonymous with height—a lake, with depth—the ocean, with vastness —the sun, with glory.

So that a picture with a mountain, a lake, and an ocean—however poor in paint—is inevitably "lofty," "vast," "infinite," and "glorious"—on paper.

There are those also, sombre of mien, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and

burrow in crypts; collecting—comparing—compiling —classifying—contradicting.

Experts these—for whom a date is an accomplishment—a hall mark, success!

Careful in scrutiny are they, and conscientious of judgment—establishing, with due weight, unimportant reputations—discovering the picture, by the stain on the back—testing the torso, by the leg that is missing —filling folios with doubts on the way of that limb—disputatious and dictatorial, concerning the birthplace of inferior persons—speculating, in much writing, upon the great worth of bad work.

True clerks of the collection, they mix memoranda with ambition, and, reducing Art to statistics, they "file" the fifteenth century, and "pigeon-hole" the antique!

Then the Preacher "appointed"!

He stands in high places—harangues and holds forth.

Sage of the Universities—learned in many matters, and of much experience in all, save his subject.

Exhorting—denouncing—directing.

Filled with wrath and earnestness.

Bringing powers of persuasion, and polish of language, to prove—nothing.

Torn with much teaching—having naught to impart.

Impressive—important—shallow.

Defiant—distressed—desperate.

Crying out, and cutting himself—while the gods hear not.

Gentle priest of the Philistine withal, again he ambles pleasantly from all point, and through many volumes, escaping scientific assertion—"babbles of green fields."

So Art has become foolishly confounded with education—that all should be equally qualified.

Whereas, while polish, refinement, culture, and breeding, are in no way arguments for artistic result, it is also no reproach to the most finished scholar or greatest gentleman in the land that he be absolutely without eye for painting or ear for music—that in his heart he prefer the popular print to the scratch of Rembrandt's needle, or the songs of the hall to Beethoven's "C minor Symphony."

Let him have but the wit to say so, and not feel the admission a proof of inferiority.

Art happens—no hovel is safe from it, no Prince may depend upon it, the vastest intelligence cannot

bring it about, and puny efforts to make it universal end in quaint comedy, and coarse farce.

This is as it should be—and all attempts to make it otherwise are due to the eloquence of the ignorant, the zeal of the conceited.

The boundary line is clear. Far from me to propose to bridge it over—that the pestered people be pushed across. No! I would save them from further fatigue. I would come to their relief, and would lift from their shoulders this incubus of Art.

Why, after centuries of freedom from it, and indifference to it, should it now be thrust upon them by the blind—until wearied and puzzled, they know no longer how they shall eat or drink—how they shall sit or stand—or wherewithal they shall clothe themselves—without afflicting Art.

But, lo! there is much talk without!

Triumphantly they cry, "Beware! This matter does indeed concern us. We also have our part in all true Art!—for, remember the 'one touch of Nature' that 'makes the whole world kin.'"

True, indeed. But let not the unwary jauntily suppose that Shakespeare herewith hands him his passport to Paradise, and thus permits him speech

among the chosen. Rather, learn that, in this very sentence, he is condemned to remain without—to continue with the common.

This one chord that vibrates with all—this "one touch of Nature" that calls aloud to the response of each—that explains the popularity of the "Bull" of Paul Potter—that excuses the price of Murillo's "Conception"—this one unspoken sympathy that pervades humanity, is—Vulgarity!

Vulgarity—under whose fascinating influence "the many have elbowed "the few," and the gentle circle of Art swarms with the intoxicated mob of mediocrity, whose leaders prate and counsel, and call aloud, where the Gods once spoke in whisper!

And now from their midst the Dilettante stalks abroad. The amateur is loosed. The voice of the æsthete is heard in the land, and catastrophe is upon us.

The meddler beckons the vengeance of the Gods, and ridicule threatens the fair daughters of the land.

And there are curious converts to a weird *culte*, in which all instinct for attractiveness—all freshness and sparkle—all woman's winsomeness—is to give way to a strange vocation for the unlovely—and this desecration in the name of the Graces!

Shall this gaunt, ill-at-ease, distressed, abashed

mixture of *mauvaise honte* and desperate assertion call itself artistic, and claim cousinship with the artist—who delights in the dainty, the sharp, bright gaiety of beauty?

No!—a thousand times no! Here are no connections of ours.

We will have nothing to do with them.

Forced to seriousness, that emptiness may be hidden, they dare not smile—

While the artist, in fulness of heart and head, is glad, and laughs aloud, and is happy in his strength, and is merry at the pompous pretension—the solemn silliness that surrounds him.

For Art and Joy go together, with bold openness, and high head, and ready hand—fearing naught, and dreading no exposure.

Know, then, all beautiful women, that we are with you. Pay no heed, we pray you, to this outcry of the unbecoming—this last plea for the plain.

It concerns you not.

Your own instinct is near the truth—your own wit far surer guide than the untaught ventures of thick heeled Apollos.

What! will you up and follow the first piper that leads you down Petticoat Lane, there, on a Sabbath, to gather, for the week, from the dull rags of

ages wherewith to bedeck yourselves? that, beneath your travestied awkwardness, we have trouble to find your own dainty selves? Oh, fie! Is the world, then, exhausted? and must we go back because the thumb of the mountebank jerks the other way?

Costume is not dress.

And the wearers of wardrobes may not be doctors of taste!

For by what authority shall these be pretty masters? Look well, and nothing have they invented—nothing put together for comeliness' sake.

Haphazard from their shoulders hang the garments of the hawker—combining in their person the motley of many manners with the medley of the mummers' closet.

Set up as a warning, and a finger-post of danger, they point to the disastrous effect of Art upon the middle classes.

Why this lifting of the brow in deprecation of the present—this pathos in reference to the past?

If Art be rare to-day, it was seldom heretofore.

It is false, this teaching of decay.

The master stands in no relation to the moment at

which he occurs—a monument of isolation—hinting at sadness—having no part in the progress of his fellow men.

He is also no more the product of civilisation than is the scientific truth asserted dependent upon the wisdom of a period. The assertion itself requires the *man* to make it. The truth was from the beginning.

So Art is limited to the infinite, and beginning there cannot progress.

A silent indication of its wayward independence from all extraneous advance, is in the absolutely unchanged condition and form of implement since the beginning of things.

The painter has but the same pencil—the sculptor the chisel of centuries.

Colours are not more since the heavy hangings of night were first drawn aside, and the loveliness of light revealed.

Neither chemist nor engineer can offer new elements of the masterpiece.

False again, the fabled link between the grandeur of Art and the glories and virtues of the State, for Art feeds not upon nations, and peoples may be wiped from the face of the earth, but Art *is*.

It is indeed high time that we cast aside the weary weight of responsibility and co-partnership, and know that, in no way, do our virtues minister to its worth, in no way do our vices impede its triumph!

How irksome! how hopeless! how superhuman the self-imposed task of the nation! How sublimely vain the belief that it shall live nobly or art perish.

Let us reassure ourselves, at our own option is our virtue. Art we in no way affect.

A whimsical goddess, and a capricious, her strong sense of joy tolerates no dulness, and, live we never so spotlessly, still may she turn her back upon us.

As, from time immemorial, she has done upon the Swiss in their mountains.

What more worthy people! Whose every Alpine gap yawns with tradition, and is stocked with noble story; yet, the perverse and scornful one will none of it, and the sons of patriots are left with the clock that turns the mill, and the sudden cuckoo, with difficulty restrained in its box!

For this was Tell a hero! For this did Gessler die!

Art, the cruel jade, cares not, and hardens her heart, and hies her off to the East, to find, among the opium-eaters of Nankin, a favourite with whom she lingers fondly—caressing his blue porcelain, and painting his

coy maidens, and marking his plates with her six marks of choice—indifferent in her companionship with him, to all save the virtue of his refinement!

He it is who calls her—he who holds her!

And again to the West, that her next lover may bring together the Gallery at Madrid, and show to the world how the Master towers above all; and in their intimacy they revel, he and she, in this knowledge; and he knows the happiness untasted by other mortal.

She is proud of her comrade, and promises that in after-years, others shall pass that way, and understand.

So in all time does this superb one cast about for the man worthy her love—and Art seeks the Artist alone.

Where he is, there she appears, and remains with him—loving and fruitful—turning never aside in moments of hope deferred—of insult—and of ribald misunderstanding; and when he dies she sadly takes her flight, though loitering yet in the land, from fond association, but refusing to be consoled.*

With the man, then, and not with the multitude, are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few—scant, indeed, the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty.

* And so have we the ephemeral influence of the Master's memory—the afterglow, in which are warmed, for a while, the worker and disciple.

From the sunny morning, when, with her glorious Greek relenting, she yielded up the secret of repeated line, as, with his hand in hers, together they marked in marble, the measured rhyme of lovely limb and draperies flowing in unison, to the day when she dipped the Spaniard's brush in light and air, and made his people live within their frames, and *stand upon their legs*, that all nobility and sweetness, and tenderness, and magnificence should be theirs by right, ages had gone by, and few had been her choice.

Countless, indeed, the horde of pretenders! But she knew them not.

A teeming, seething, busy mass, whose virtue was industry, and whose industry was vice!

Their names go to fill the catalogue of the collection at home, of the gallery abroad, for the delectation of the bagman and the critic.

Therefore have we cause to be merry!—and to cast away all care—resolved that all is well—as it ever was—and that it is not meet that we should be cried at, and urged to take measures!

Enough have we endured of dulness! Surely are we weary of weeping, and our tears have been cozened from us falsely, for they have called out woe! when there was no grief—and, alas! where all is fair!

We have then but to wait—until, with the mark of the Gods upon him—there come among us again the chosen—who shall continue what has gone before. Satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete—hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon—and broidered, with the birds, upon the fan of Hokusai—at the foot of Fusi-yama.

"*Rengaines!*"

LAST night, at Prince's Hall, Mr. Whistler made his first public appearance as a lecturer on Art. . . . . There were some arrows . . . . shot off . . . . and (O, *mea culpa!*) at dress reformers most of all. . . . . That an artist will find beauty in ugliness, *le beau dans l'horrible*, is now a commonplace of the schools. . . . . I differ entirely from Mr. Whistler. An Artist is not an isolated fact; he is the resultant of a certain *milieu* and a certain *entourage*, and can no more be born of a nation that is devoid of any sense of beauty than a fig can grow from a thorn or a rose blossom from a thistle. . . . . The poet is the supreme Artist, for he is the master of colour and of form, and the real musician besides, and is lord over all life and all arts; and so to the poet beyond all others are these mysteries known; to Edgar Allan Poe and Baudelaire, not to Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche. . . . .

Pall Mall Gazette, Feb. 21, 1885.

REFLECTION:

It is not enough that our simple Sunflower thrive on his "thistle"—he has now grafted Edgar Poe on the "rose" tree of the early American Market in "a certain milieu" of dry goods and sympathy; and "a certain entourage" of worship and wooden nutmegs.

Born of a Nation, not absolutely "devoid of any sense of beauty"—Their idol—cherished—listened to—and understood!
Foolish Baudelaire!—Mistaken Mallarmé!

OSCAR WILDE.

Tenderness in Tite Street

TO THE POET:

OSCAR—I have read your exquisite article in the *Pall Mall.* Nothing is more delicate, in the flattery of "the Poet" to "the Painter," than the *naïveté* of "the Poet," in the choice of his Painters—Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche! *The World.*

You have pointed out that "the Painter's" mission is to find "*le beau dans l'horrible,*" and have left to "the Poet" the discovery of "*l'horrible*" *dans* "*le beau*"!

CHELSEA.

TO THE PAINTER:

The World.

DEAR Butterfly—By the aid of a biographical dictionary, I made the discovery that there were once two painters, called Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche, who rashly lectured upon Art. As of their works nothing at all remains, I conclude that they explained themselves away.

Be warned in time, James; and remain, as I do, incomprehensible. To be great is to be misunderstood.—*Tout à vous,*

OSCAR WILDE.

REFLECTION:

I do know a bird, who, like Oscar, with his head in the sand, still believes in the undiscovered I

If to be misunderstood is to be great, it was rash in Oscar to reveal the source of his inspirations: the "*Biographical Dictionary!*"

To the Committee of the "National Art Exhibition"

Letter read at a meeting of this Society, associated for purposes of Art reform.

GENTLEMEN—I am naturally interested in any effort made among Painters to prove that they are alive—but when I find, thrust in the van of your leaders, the body of my dead 'Arry, I know that putrefaction alone can result. When, following 'Arry, there comes on Oscar, you finish in farce, and bring upon yourselves the scorn and ridicule of your *confrères* in Europe.

The World, Nov. 17, 1888.

What has Oscar in common with Art? except that he dines at our tables and picks from our platters the plums for the pudding he peddles in the provinces. Oscar—the amiable, irresponsible, esurient Oscar—with no more sense of a picture than of the fit of a coat, has the courage of the opinions . . . of others!

With 'Arry and Oscar you have avenged the Academy.

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,

Enclosed to the Poet, with a line: "Oscar, you must really keep outside 'the radius'!"

Quand même!

The World, Nov. 24, 1886.

ATLAS, this is very sad! With our James vulgarity begins at home, and should be allowed to stay there. —*A vous*,

OSCAR WILDE.

TO WHOM:

A poor thing," Oscar!—"but," for once, I suppose "your own."

Philanthropy and Art

THE *Saturday Review* has not thought it disgraceful to once more justify its title to be called the "Saturday Reviler." This time it is not to break upon the wheel some poor butterfly of a lady traveller or novelist, but to scoff at an aged painter of the highest repute—Mr. Herbert—upon his retirement to the rank of "Honorary Academician," after a career such as few, if any, painters living can boast. This it pleases the "Reviler" to congratulate artists upon as "good news," without a word or a thought of what the retiring Academician has done in art, except to utter the contemptible untruth that "his resignation means that he has found out that he is beaten," *not* by the natural failing of old age, but because he failed to impress such a writer as this with the special exhibition of the works of his long life, that was made some few years back to mark the completion of his last great picture for the House of Lords, "The

Judgment of Daniel." That exhibition, which most people, who know anything about painting in its highest style of religious and monumental art, thought a most interesting display of a painter's career, is described by this most genial of critics as "acres of pallid purple canvases, with wizened saints and virgins in attitudinizing groups."

Whether that collection of Mr. Herbert's works had merit or not is matter of opinion which I am not concerned to dispute; but, as a matter of fact, there were only *three* small pictures in which the virgin or any saints appeared; the other pictures, besides the two large works of "The Delivery of the Law" and "The Judgment of Daniel," painted for the nation, being historical subjects, such as the "Lear Disinheriting Cordelia," a fresco of which is in the House of Lords; "The Acquittal of the Seven Bishops," which the Corporation of Salford purchased for their gallery of art; and several fine works of his youth, such as the "Brides of Venice," a "Procession in Venice, 1528," and others, which won for him his election to the Academy forty-five years ago, when he had to compete with such men as are, unfortunately, not to be found now among the candidates—Etty—Maclise—Dyce—Egg—and Elmore.

But the "*Saturday's*" art critic, if he ever saw this

exhibition at all, didn't go to see these pictures. As Goethe says, "the eye sees what it came to see," and he went to see the "acres of purple canvases, with their wizened saints," which were not there. No matter—it suits his purpose to declare that they were, just as it does to cram into a paragraph more ignorance, insolence, and false assertions combined than is often to be met with even in this locality of literature, where the editor seems to be surrounded with all the prigs, and the pumps, and the snobs of the literary profession.

Truth, Aug. 19, 1886.

"*Nous avons changé tout cela!*"

HOITY-TOITY! my dear Henry!—What is all this? How can you startle the "Constant Reader," of this cold world, by these sudden dashes into the unexpected? *Truth*, Sept. 2, 1886.

Perceive also what happens.

Sweet in the security of my own sense of things, and looking upon you surely as the typical "*Sapem*" of modern progress and civilization, here do I, in full Paris, *à l'heure de l'absinthe*, upon mischievous discussion intent, call aloud for "*Truth.*"

"*Vous allez voir*," I say to the brilliant brethren gathered about my table, "you shall hear the latest beautiful thing and bold, said by our great Henry—'*capable de tout*,' beside whom '*ce coquin d'Habacuc*' was mild indeed and usual!" And straightway to my stultification, I find myself translating paragraphs of pathos and indignation, in which a colourless old gentleman of the Academy is sympathized with, and

made a doddering hero of, for no better reason than that he *is* old—and those who would point out the wisdom and comfort of his withdrawal into the wigwam of private life, sternly reproved and anathematized and threatened with shame—until they might well expect to find themselves come upon by the bears of the aged and irascible, though bald-headed, Prophet, whom the children had thoughtfully urged to "go up."

Fancy the Frenchmen's astonishment as I read, and their placid amusement as I attempted to point out that it was "meant drolly—that *enfin* you were a *mystificateur!*"

Henry, why should I thus be mortified? Also, why this new *pose*, this cheap championship of senility?

How, in the name of all that is incompetent, do you find much virtue in work spreading over more time! What means this affectation of *naïveté*.

We all know that work excuses itself only by reason of its quality.

If the work be foolish, it surely is not less foolish because an honest and misspent lifetime has been passed in producing it.

What matters it that the offending worker has grown old among us, and has endeared himself to

many by his caprices as ratepayer and neighbour?

Personally, he may have claims upon his surroundings; but, as the painter of poor pictures, he is damned for ever.

You see, my Henry, that it is not sufficient to be, as you are in wit and wisdom, among us, amazing and astute; a very Daniel in your judgment of many vexed questions; of a frankness and loyalty withal in your crusade against abuses, that makes of the keen litigator a most dangerous Quixote.

This peculiar temperament gives you that superb sense of right, *outside the realms of art*, that amounts to genius, and carries with it continued success and triumph in the warfare you wage.

But here it helps you not. And so you find yourself, for instance, pleasantly prattling in print of "English Art."

Learn, then, O! Henry, that there is no such thing as English Art. You might as well talk of English Mathematics. Art is Art, and Mathematics is Mathematics.

What you call English Art, is not Art at all, but produce, of which there is, and always has been, and always will be, a plenty, whether the men producing it are dead and called ——, or (I refer you to your

own selection, far be it from me to choose)—or alive and called ——, whosoever you like as you turn over the Academy catalogue.

The great truth, you have to understand, is that it matters not at all whom you prefer in this long list. They all belong to the excellent army of mediocrity; the differences between them being infinitely small —merely microscopic—as compared to the vast distance between any one of them and the Great.

They are the commercial travellers of Art, whose works are their wares, and whose exchange is the Academy.

They pass and are forgotten, or remain for a while in the memory of the worthies who knew them, and who cling to their faith in them, as it flatters their own place in history—famous themselves—the friends of the famous!

Speak of them, if it please you, with uncovered head—even as in France you would remove your hat as there passes by the hearse—but remember it is from the conventional habit of awe alone, this show of respect, and called forth generally by the casual corpse of the commonest kind.

PARIS, Aug. 21, 1886.

The Inevitable

WHEN I suggested you as the "Sapeur of modern progress," my dear Henry, I thought to convey delicately my appreciation, wrapped in graceful compliment. *Truth*, Sept. 9, 1886.

When I am made to say that you are the "Sapem" of civilisation—whatever that may mean—I would seem to insinuate an impertinence clothed in classic error.

I trust that, if you forgive me, you will never pardon the printer.—Always,

"*Noblesse oblige*"

The World, Dec. 31, 1884.

ATLAS, look at this! It has been culled from the *Plumber and Decorator*, of all insidious prints, and forwarded to me by the untiring people who daily supply me with the thinkings of my critics.

Read, Atlas, and let me execute myself:

"The 'Peacock' drawing-room of a well-to-do ship-owner, of Liverpool, at Queen's Gate, London, is hand-painted, representing the noble bird with wings expanded, painted by an Associate of the Royal Academy, at a cost of £7000, and fortunate in claiming his daughter as his bride, and is one of the finest specimens of high art in decoration in the kingdom. The mansion is of modern construction."

He is not guilty, this honest Associate! It was *I*, Atlas, who did this thing—"alone I did it"—*I* "hand-painted" this room in the "mansion of modern construction."

Woe is me! *I* secreted, in the provincial shipowner's home, the "noble bird with wings expanded"—*I* perpetrated, in harmless obscurity, "the finest specimen of high-art decoration"—and the Academy is without stain in the art of its member. Also the immaculate character of that Royal body has been falsely impugned by this wicked "*Plumber*"!

Mark these things, Atlas, that justice may be done, the innocent spared, and history cleanly written.

Bon soir!

CHELSEA.

Early Laurels

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—In your report of the Graham sale of pictures at Messrs. Christie and Manson's rooms, I read the following: *The Observer*, April 11, 1886.

"The next work, put upon the easel, was a 'Nocturne in blue and silver,' by J. M. Whistler. It was received with hisses."

May I beg, through your widely spread paper, to acknowledge the distinguished, though I fear unconscious, compliment so publicly paid.

It is rare that recognition, so complete, is made during the lifetime of the painter, and I would wish to have recorded my full sense of this flattering exception in my favour.

CHELSEA.

A Further Proposition

THE notion that I paint flesh lower in tone than it is in nature, is entirely based upon the popular superstition as to what flesh really is—when seen on canvas; for the people never look at nature with any sense of its pictorial appearance—for which reason, by the way, they also never look at a picture with any sense of nature, but, unconsciously from habit, with reference to what they have seen in other pictures. *Art Journal*, 1887.

Now, in the usual "pictures of the year" there is but one flesh, that shall do service under all circumstances, whether the person painted be in the soft light of the room or out in the glare of the open. The one aim of the unsuspecting painter is to make his man "stand out" from the frame—never doubting that, on the contrary, he should really, and in truth absolutely does, stand *within* the frame—and at a depth behind it equal to the distance at which

the painter sees his model. The frame is, indeed, the window through which the painter looks at his model, and nothing could be more offensively inartistic than this brutal attempt to thrust the model on the hither-side of this window !

Yet this is the false condition of things to which all have become accustomed, and in the stupendous effort to bring it about, exaggeration has been exhausted—and the traditional means of the incompetent can no further go.

Lights have been heightened until the white of the tube alone remains—shadows have been deepened until black alone is left. Scarcely a feature stays in its place, so fierce is its intention of " firmly " coming forth ; and in the midst of this unseemly struggle for prominence, the gentle truth has but a sorry chance, falling flat and flavourless, and without force.

The Master from Madrid, himself, beside this monster success of mediocrity, would be looked upon as mild : *beau bien sure, mais pas "dans le mouvement"* !

Whereas, could the people be induced to turn their eyes but for a moment, with the fresh power of comparison, upon their fellow-creatures as they pass in the gallery, they might be made dimly to perceive (though I doubt it, so blind is their belief in the bad,

how little they resemble the impudent images on the walls! how "quiet" in colour they are! how "grey!" how "low in tone." And then it might be explained to their riveted intelligence how they had mistaken meretriciousness for mastery, and by what mean methods the imposture had been practised upon them.

An Opportunity

CHER Monsieur — M. —— m'a remis votre petite planche—port d'Amsterdam avec une epreuve. Elle est charmante et je serais fort heureux de la faire paraître dans l'article consacré à vos eaux fortes. Seulement, je crois que vous avez mal interprété ma demande et que par le fait nous ne nous entendons pas bien. Vous me demandez 63 guinées pour cette planche, soit plus de 2000 francs, outre que le prix dépasse celui de la planche la plus chère parue dans la *Gazette* de puis sa fondation, y compris les chefs-d'œuvre de Jacquemart et de Gaillard, il n'est pas dans les habitudes de la maison, de payer les planches d'artistes qui accompagnent un compte-rendu de leur œuvre. C'est ainsi que nous avons agi avec Méryon, Seymour Haden, Edwards, Evershed, Legros, &c.

Du reste, la planche pourrait rester votre propriété. Nous vous la remettrions après avoir fait notre tirage. Il est entendu qu'elle serait acierée.

Si ces conditions vous agréent, cher monsieur, je me ferai un vrai plaiser de faire dans la *Gazette* un article sur votre beau talent d'aquafortiste. Dans le cas contraire, je me verais avec mille regrets, dans la necessité de vous renvoyer la planche que je me fusse fait cependant un véritable honneur de publier.

Veuillez agréer, cher monsieur, l'expression de mes meilleurs sentiments.

LE DIRECTEUR de la
Gazette des Beaux-Arts.

PARIS, le 12 Juin 1878.

The Opportunity Neglected

CHER Monsieur—Je regrette infiniment que mes moyens ne me permettent pas de naître dans votre Journal.

L'article que vous me proposez, comme berceau, me couterait trop cher.

Il me faudrait donc reprendre ma planche et rester inconnu jusqu'à la fin des choses, puisque je n'aurais pas été inventé par la *Gazette des Beaux Arts*.—Recevez, Monsieur,

Nostalgia

. . . . "QUITE true—now that it is established as an improbability, it becomes true!

Extract from a letter *à propos* of Mr. Whistler's contemplated visit to his native land.

They tell me that December has been fixed upon, by the Fates, for my arrival in New York—and, if I escape the Atlantic, I am to be wrecked by the reporter on the pier.

The World, Oct. 13, 1886.

I shall be in his hands, even as is the sheep in the hands of his shearer—for I have learned nothing from those who have gone before—and been lost too!

What will you! I know Matthew Arnold, and am told that he whispered Truth exquisite, unheeded in the haste of America.

And these others who have crossed the seas, that they might fasten upon the hurried ones at home and gird at them with wisdom, hysterically acquired, and administered, unblushingly, with a suddenness of purpose that prevented their ever being listened to here,—must I follow in their wake, to be met with

suspicion by my compatriots, and resented as the invading instructor?

Heavens!—who knows!—also in the papers, where naturally I read only of myself, I gather a general impression of offensive aggressiveness, that, coupled with Chase's monstrous lampoon, has prepared me for the tomahawk on landing.

How dared he, Chase, to do this wicked thing?—and I who was charming, and made him beautiful on canvas—the Masher of the Avenues.

However, I may not put off until the age of the amateur has gone by, but am to take with me some of those works which have won for me the execration of Europe, that they may be shown to a country in which I cannot be a prophet, and where I, who have no intention of being other than joyous—improving no one—not even myself—will say again my "Ten o'Clock," which I refused to repeat in London—*J'ai dit!*

This is no time for hesitation—one cannot continually disappoint a Continent!

An Insinuation

TO THE EDITOR:

MY attention has been directed to a paragraph that has gone the round of the papers, to the effect that Mr. John Burr and Mr. Reid have "withdrawn from the Society of British Artists." This tardy statement acquires undue significance at this moment, with a tendency to mislead, implying, as it might, that these resignations were in consequence of, and intended as a marked disapproval of, the determined stand made by the Society in excluding from their coming exhibition the masses of commonplace work hitherto offered to the public in their galleries. No such importance attaches, however, to their resignations, as these two gentlemen left Suffolk Street six months ago.

The Daily News, Nov. 22, 1886.

An Imputation

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—Mr. Whistler denies that the recent policy of the Society of British Artists was the cause of the secession of Messrs. Burr and Reid from the ranks of that Society, and mentions in proof of his correction that their resignation took place six months ago. He might have gone further, and added that their secession corresponded in time with his own election as president. It is well known to artists that one, if not both, of these gentlemen left the Society knowing that changes of policy, of which they could not approve, were inevitable under the presidency of Mr. Whistler. It will be for the patrons of the Suffolk Street Gallery to decide whether the more than half-uncovered walls which will be offered to their view next week are more interesting than the work of many artists of more than average merit which will be conspicuous by its absence, owing to the selfish policy inaugurated.

The Daily News, Nov. 24, 1886.

A BRITISH ARTIST.

"*Autre Temps autre Mœurs*"

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR — The anonymous "British Artist" says that "Mr. Whistler denies that the recent policy of the Society of British Artists was the cause of the secession of Messrs. Reid and Burr from the ranks of that Society."

The Daily News, Nov. 26, 1886.

Far from me to propose to penetrate the motives of such withdrawal, but what I did deny was that it could possibly be caused—as its strangely late announcement seemed sweetly to insinuate—by the strong determination to tolerate no longer the mediocre work that had hitherto habitually swarmed the walls of Suffolk Street.

This is a plain question of date, and I pointed out that these two gentlemen left the Society six months

ago—long before the supervising committee were called upon to act at all, or make any demonstration whatever. Your correspondent regrets that I do not "go further," and straightway goes further himself, and scarcely fares better, when, with a quaintness of *naïveté* rare at this moment, he proposes that "it will be for the patrons of the gallery to decide whether the more than half-uncovered walls are more interesting than the works of many artists of more than the average merit."

Now it will be for the patrons to decide absolutely nothing. It is, and will always be, for the gentlemen of the hanging committee alone, duly chosen, to decide whether empty space be preferable to poor pictures—whether, in short, it be their duty to cover walls, merely that walls may be covered—no matter with what quality of work.

Indeed, the period of the patron has utterly passed away, and the painter takes his place—to point out what he knows to be consistent with the demands of his art—without deference to patrons or prejudice to party. Beyond this, whether the "policy of Mr. Whistler and his following" be "selfish or

no," matters but little; but if the policy of your correspondent's "following" find itself among the ruthlessly rejected, his letter is more readily explained.

Talent in a Napkin

IF those who talk and write so glibly as to the desirability of artists devoting themselves to the representation of the naked human form, only knew a tithe of the degradation enacted before the model is sufficiently hardened to her shameful calling, they would for ever hold their tongues and pens in supporting the practice. Is not clothedness a distinct type and feature of our Christian faith? All art representations of nakedness are out of harmony with it.

Lecture before the Church Congress, Oct. 7, 1885.

J. C. HORSLEY, R.A.

The Critic "Catching on"

MR. WHISTLER is again, in a sense, the mainstay of the Society (British Artists), partly through his own individuality and partly through the innovations he has introduced. . . . . He has several oil and pastel pictures, very slight in themselves, of the female nude, dignified and graceful in line and charmingly chaste, entitled "Harmony," "Caprice," and "Note." Beneath the latter Mr. Whistler has written, "Horsley *soit qui mal y pense.*"

Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 8, 1885.

"This is not," said the artist, "what people are sure to call it, 'Whistler's little joke.' On the contrary, it is an indignant protest against the idea that there is any immorality in the nude."

REFLECTION: Meant "friendly."

Ingratitude

NO, kind sir—*trop de zèle* on the part of your representative—for I surely never explain, and Art certainly requires no "indignant protest" against the unseemliness of senility. "Horsley *soit qui mal y pense*" is meanwhile a sweet sentiment—why more—and why "morality"?

Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 10, 1885.

The Complacent One

MR. WHISTLER has issued a brown-paper portfolio of half a dozen "Notes," reproduced in marvellous facsimile. These "Notes" are delightful sketches in Indian ink and crayon, masterly so far as they go—but, then, they go such a little way . . . the "Notes" can only be regarded as painter's raw material, interesting as correct sketches, but unworthy the glories of facsimile reproduction, and imposing margin. . . . The chief honours of the portfolio belong to the publishers. . . .

Magazine of Art, Dec. 1887.

The Critic-flaneur

SIR—You, who are, I perceive, in your present brilliant incarnation, an undaunted and undulled pursuer of pleasing truths, listen, I pray you, while again I indicate, with sweet argument, the alternative of the bewildered one. *Sunday Times*, Jan. 15, 1888.

Notably, it is not necessary that the "Art Critic" should distinguish between the real and the "reproduction," or otherwise understand anything of the matter of which he writes—for much shall be forgiven him—yet surely, as I have before now pointed out, he might inquire.

Had the expounder of exhibitions, travelling for the *Magazine of Art*, asked the Secretary in the galleries of the Royal Society of British Artists, he would have been told that the "Notes" on the staircase, and in the vestibule, are not "delightful sketches in Indian ink and crayon . . . . *reproduced in marvellous facsimile* by Boussod, Valadon & Co. . . . . unworthy

the glories of facsimile reproduction, and imposing margin" . . . . while "the chief honours of the portfolio, however, belong to the publishers"—but are, disconcerting as I acknowledge it to be, *themselves the lithographs from nature*, drawn on the stone upon the spot.

Thus easily provided with paragraph, he would also have been spared the mortification of rebuke from his well-meaning and embarrassed employers.

Let the gentleman be warned—let him learn that the foolish critic only,—*looks*—and brings disaster, upon his paper—the safe and well-conducted one "informs himself."

Yours, Sir, gently,

A Played-out Policy

TO THE EDITOR
OF THE "PALL MALL GAZETTE":

SIR—In your courageous crusade against the Demon Dulness and his preposterous surroundings, I think it well that there should be delivered into your hands certain documents for immediate publication, that your readers may be roused quickly, and hear again how well fenced in are the foolish in strong places—and how greatly to be desired is their exposure, discomfiture, and death—that Truth may prevail. *Pall Mall Gazette* Dec. 9, 1886.

It happened in this way. The criticism in the *Times* called for instant expostulation, and my answer was consequently sent in to the Editor, who forthwith returned it, regretting "that its tone prevented its appearance in the paper." . . . . I thereupon withdrew to write the following note to the Editor in person:—

"Dear Sir—Permit me to call your courteous attention to the fact that the enclosed letter to the Editor

of the *Times* is in reply to an article that appeared in your paper—and that, as I sign my name in full, I alone am responsible for its tone or form; indeed, that such is its tone and form, is because it is my letter.

"In common fairness the answer to, or comment upon, any statements made in your paper should be published in your paper, as proper etiquette prevents its insertion in any other journal.

"Also, you surely would not propose to dictate certain forms or styles in which alone the columns of the *Times* are to be approached—as who should say all other savour of sacrilege!—or acquiescence alone would do, and you would have to write all your letters yourselves.

"My letter concerns the effect produced by criticism of a commonplace and inferior kind, wholly unworthy the first paper in England—and I am startled to learn, and still unwilling to believe, that the *Times* would shun all ventilation and refuse to publish any letter as its sole means of screening its staff or protecting its writers.

"I submit that the tone of my letter sins against no laws that are accepted in antagonism—that it offends in no way the etiquette of attack known to gentlemen.

"I beg, therefore, again, that if there be still time for its insertion, you will have it printed in your issue of to-morrow, or will say that it shall appear in the *Times* of Thursday morning.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Very faithfully,

"J. McNeill Whistler."

I was now told, "with the Editor's compliments," "that my letter should be considered." Taking this in complete good faith, I left the office, to discover the next day in print a remnant of the letter in question; that, by itself, entirely did away with sufficient reason for its being there at all. The two ensuing notes explain themselves:

To J. McN. Whistler, Esq.:

"The Editor of the *Times* has inserted in to-day's paper the only portion of Mr. Whistler's letter of November 30 which appears to have any claim to publication.

"Printing House Square, Dec. 1, 1886."

"To the Editor of the *Times*:

"Dear Sir—I beg to acknowledge the consummate sense of opportunity displayed by the Editor of the *Times*, in his cunning production of a part of my letter.

"Amazing! *Mes compliments!*"

Without further comment I hand you a copy of the rejected letter.

"To the Editor of the *Times*.—Sir—In his article upon the Society of British Artists, your Art gentleman ventures the opinion of the 'plain man.'

"That such opinion is out of place and stultifying in a question of Art never occurs to him, and it is therefore frankly cited as, in a way, conclusive.

"The *naïf* train of thought that justified the importance attached to this poor 'plain' opinion at all would seem to be the same that pervades the writing throughout; until it becomes difficult to discover where the easy effrontery and self-sufficiency of the 'plain one,' nothing doubting, cease, and the wit and wisdom of the experienced expert begin—so that one unconsciously confounds the incautious critic with the plausible plain person, who finally becomes the same authority.

"Blind plainness certainly is the characteristic of the solemn censure upon the fine work of Mr. Stott, of Oldham—plain blindness the omission of all mention of Mr. Ludovici's dainty dancing-girl.

"Bewilderment among paintings is naturally the fate of the 'plain man,' but, when put forth in the *Times*, his utterances, however empty, acquire a semblance of sense; so that while he gravely descants with bald

assurance upon the engineering of the light in the galleries, and the decoration of the walls, the reader stands a chance of being misled, and may not discover at once that the 'plain' writer is qualified by ignorance alone to continue.

"Permit me, therefore, to rectify inconsequent impressions, and tell your readers that there is nothing 'tentative' in the 'arrangement' of colour, walls, or drapery—that the battens should *not* 'be removed' —that they are meant to remain, not only for their use, but as bringing parallel lines into play that subdivide charmingly the lower portion of the walls and add to their light appearance—that the whole 'combination' is complete—and that the 'plain man' is, as usual, 'out of it.'—I am, Sir, etc.,

"J. McNeill Whistler."

The question of fair dealing and good manners in this matter I could not leave in better hands than your own, and I will only add that hitherto I have always met with the utmost readiness on the part of the press to receive into their columns any reply, however opposed to assertions of their own.

Surely it is but poor policy this peremptory attempt to maintain in authority the weak and blundering one,

that he may destroy himself and bring sorrow upon his people.

Rather let him be thrust from his post, that he may be "brayed in a mortar among wheat with a pestle"—that the Just be assuaged and foolishness depart from among us.

An Interview with an ex-President

THE adverse vote by which the Royal Society of British Artists transferred its oath of allegiance from Mr. Whistler is for the time the chief topic of conversation in artistic circles. . . . . We instructed our representative to visit Mr. Whistler to obtain his explanation of the affair.

Pall Mall Gazette, June 11, 1888.

"The state of affairs?" said Mr. Whistler, in his light and airy way, raising his eyebrows and twinkling his eyes, as if it were all the best possible fun in the world; "why, my dear sir, there's positively *no* state of affairs at all. Contrary to public declaration, there's actually nothing chaotic in the whole business; on the contrary, everything is in order, and just as it should be. The survival of the fittest as regards the presidency, don't you see, and, well—Suffolk Street is itself again! A new government has come in, and, as I told the members the other night, I congratulate the Society on the result of their vote, for no longer

can it be said that the right man is in the wrong place. No doubt their pristine sense of undisturbed somnolence will again settle upon them after the exasperated mental condition arising from the unnatural strain recently put upon the old ship. Eh? what? Ha! ha!"

"You do not then consider the Society as out of date? You do not think, as is sometimes said, that the establishment of the Grosvenor took away the *raison d'être* and original intention of the Society—that of being a foil to the Royal Academy?"

"I can hardly say what was originally intended, but I do know that it was originally full of hope, and even determination; shown in a manner by their getting a Royal Charter—the only art society in London, I believe, that has one.

"But by degrees it lapsed into a condition of incapacity—a sort of secondary state,—do you see, till it acknowledged itself a species of *crêche* for the Royal Academy. Certain it is that when I came into it the prevalent feeling among all the men was that their best work should go to 'another place.'

"I felt that this sense of inferiority was fatal to the well-being of the place.

"For that reason I attempted to bring about a sense of *esprit de corps* and ambition, which culminated

in what might be called 'my first offence'—by my proposition that members belonging to other societies should hold no official position in ours. I wanted to make it an art centre," continued Mr. Whistler, with a sudden vigour and an earnestness for which the public would hardly give credit to this Master of Badinage and Apostle of Persiflage; "they wanted it to remain a shop, although I said to them, 'Gentlemen, don't you perceive that as shopmen you have already failed, don't you see, eh?' But they were under the impression that the sales decreased under my methods and my *régime*, and ignored the fact that sales had declined all over the country from all sorts of causes, commercial, and so on.

Their only chance lay in the art tone of the place, for the old-fashioned pictures had ceased to become saleable wares—buyers simply wouldn't buy them. But members' work I *couldn't*, by the rules, eliminate—only the bad outsiders were choked off."

"Then how do you explain the bitterness of all the opposition?"

"A question of 'pull devil, pull baker,' and the devil has gone and the bakers remain in Suffolk Street! Ha! ha! Here is a list of the fiendish party who protested against the thrusting forth of their president in such an unceremonious way:—

"Alfred Stevens, Theodore Roussel, Nelson Maclean, Macnab, Waldo Story, A. Ludovici, jun., Sidney Starr, Francis James, W. A. Rixon, Aubrey Hunt, Moffatt P. Lindner, E. G. Girardot, Ludby, Arthur Hill, Llewellyn, W. Christian Symons, C. Wyllie, A. F. Grace, J. E. Grace, J. D. Watson, Jacomb Hood, Thornley, J. J. Shannon, and Charles Keen. Why, the very flower of the Society! and whom have they left—*bon Dieu!* whom have they left?"

"It was a hard fight then?"

"My dear sir, they brought up the maimed, the halt, the lame, and the blind—literally—like in Hogarth's 'Election;' they brought up everything but corpses, don't you know!—very well!"

"But all this hardly explains the bitterness of the feud and personal enmity to you."

"What? Don't you see? My presidential career had in a manner been a busy one. When I took charge of the ship I found her more or less water-logged. Well, I put the men to the pumps, and thoroughly shook up the old vessel; had her re-rigged re-cleaned, and painted—and finally I was graciously permitted to run up the Royal Standard to the mast-head, and brought her fully to the fore, ready for action—as became a Royal flagship! And as a natural result mutiny at once set in!

"Don't you see," he continued, with one of his strident laughs, "what might be considered, by the thoughtless, as benefits, were resented, by the older and wiser of the crew, as innovations and intrusions of an impertinent and offensive nature. But the immediate result was that interest in the Society was undeniably developed, not only at home, but certainly abroad. Notably in Paris all the art circle was keenly alive to what was taking place in Suffolk Street; and, although their interest in other institutions in this country had previously flagged, there was the strong willingness to take part in its exhibitions.

For example, there was Alfred Stevens, who showed his own sympathy with the progressive efforts by becoming a member. And look at the throngs of people that crowded our private views—eh? ha! ha! what! But what will you!—the question is, after all, purely a parochial one—and here I would stop to wonder, if I do not seem pathetic and out of character, why the Artist is naturally an object of vituperation to the Vestryman?—Why am *I*—who, of course, as you know, am charming—why am I the pariah of my parish?

"Why should these people do other than delight in me?—Why should they perish rather than forgive the one who had thrust upon them honour and success?"

"And the moral of it all?"

Mr. Whistler became impressive—almost imposing—as he stroked his moustache, and tried to hide a smile behind his hand.

"The organisation of this 'Royal Society of British Artists,' as shown by its very name, tended perforce to this final convulsion, resulting in the separation of the elements of which it was composed. They could not remain together, and so you see the 'Artists' have come out, and the 'British' remain—and peace and sweet obscurity are restored to Suffolk Street!—Eh? What? Ha! ha!"

Statistics

SINCE our interview with Mr. Whistler curious statements have been set afloat concerning the question of finance . . . . giving circumstantial evidence of the disaster brought upon the Society by the enforcement of the Whistlerian policy:—

Pall Mall Gazette, July 6, 1888.

This evidence, which is very interesting, is as follows:—The sales of the Society during the year 1881 were under £5000; 1882, under £6000; 1883, under £7000; 1884, under £8000; 1885 (the first year of Mr. Whistler's rule), they fell to under £4000; 1886, under £3000; 1887, under £2000; and the present year, under £1000.

On the other hand, the fact of the Society having made itself responsible to Mr. Whistler for a loan raised by him to meet a sudden expenditure for repairs, is also true; but the unwisdom of the president and members of any society having money transac-

tions between them need hardly be commented upon here. . . . .

Mr. Wyke Bayliss, the new president, strikes one as being "a strong man"—shrewd, logical, and self-restrained. The author of several books and pamphlets on the more imaginative realm of art, he is, one would say, as much permeated by religion as he is by art; to both of these qualities, curiously enough, his canvases, which usually deal with cathedral interiors of cheery hue, bear witness.

The hero of three Bond Street "one-man exhibitions," a Board-school chairman, a lecturer, champion chess-player of Surrey, a member of the Rochester Diocesan Council, a Shaksperian student, a Fellow of the Society of Cyclists, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians, and public orator of Noviomagus . . . . he is surely one of the most versatile men who ever occupied a presidential chair. . . . .

A Retrospect

TO THE EDITOR
OF THE "PALL MALL GAZETTE:"

SIR—The Royal Society of British Artists is, perhaps, by this time again unknown to your agitated readers—but I would recall a brilliant number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (July 1888), in which mischievous amusement was sought, with statistics from a newly elected President—Mr. Bayliss (Wyke).

Believing it to be, in an official and dull way, more becoming that the appointed Council of this same Society should deal with the resulting chaos, I have, until now, waited for a slight washing of hands, as who should say, on their part as representing the gentle deprecation of, I assure you, the respectable body in Suffolk Street

Well, no!—It was doubtless adjudged wiser, or milder, to "live it down," and now it, I really believe,

behoves me, in a weary way, to remind you of the document in question, and, for the sake of commonplace, uninteresting, and foolish fact, to lift up my parable and declare fallacious that which was supposed to be true, and generally to bore myself, and perhaps even you, the all-patient one, with what, I fear, we others care but little for—parish matters.

In the article, then, entitled "The Royal Society of British Artists and its Future—An Interview with the New President"—a most appalling volley of figures was fired off at *brûle-pour-point* distance. Under this deafening detonation I, having no habit, sat for days incapable—dreaming vaguely that when a President should see fit to wash his people's linen in the open, there must be indeed crime at least on the part of the offender at whose instigation such official sacrifice of dignity could come about. *I* was the offender, and for a while I sincerely believed that disaster had been brought upon this Royal Society by my own casual self. But behold, upon closer inspection, these threatening figures are meretricious and misleading, as was the building account of the early Philanthropist who, in the days of St. Paul, meant well, and was abruptly discouraged by that clear-headed apostle.

Mr. Bayliss tells us that: "The sales of the Society

during the year 1881 were under," whatever that may mean, "£5000; 1882, under £6000; 1883, under £7000; 1884, under £8000; in 1885 ('the first year of Mr. Whistler's rule') they fell to under £4000; 1886, under £3000; 1887, under £2000; and the present year, under £1000."

But also Mr. Bayliss takes this rare occasion of attention, to assert his various qualifications for his post as head of painters in the street of Suffolk, and so we learn that he is:—

"Chairman of the Board-school in his own district," "Champion chess-player of Surrey," "A member of the Diocesan Council of Rochester," "Fellow of the Society of Cyclists," and "Public Orator of Noviomagus."

As chess-player he may have intuitively bethought himself of a move—possibly the happy one,—who knows?—which in the provinces obtained him a cup; as Diocesan Councilman he may have supposed Rochester indifferent to the means used for an end; but as Public Cyclist of the Royal Society of Noviomagus his experience must be opposed to any such bluff as going his entire pile on a left bower only!

When I recovered my courage—what did I find?—first my unimpaired intelligence, and then my memory.

Now, to my intelligence, it becomes patent that the chairman of a Clapham School-board, proposes by his figures to prove, that the income of the sacrificed Society had of late years steadily increased:—"In 1881, under £5000; 1882, under £6000; 1883, under £7000; 1884, under £8000," until, under the baneful reign of terror and Whistler in 1885—"the first year" of the sacrilegious era—the receipts fell to £4000—and have continued to decrease until, in this present year, they fall to the miserable sum of under a thousand pounds—a revelation! discreet, statesmanlike, and worthy the orator at his best!

Unfortunately for the triumph of such audacious demonstration, my revived memory points out that Mr. Whistler was only elected President in June 1886, and, in conformity with the ancient rules and amusing customs of the venerable body, only came into office six months afterwards—that is, practically, in January 1887. Again, with this last exhibition, he, as everybody knows, had nothing whatever to do.

Immediately, therefore, the conclusion is "quite other" than that put forth by the Cyclist of his suburb, and we arrive at the, for once, not unamusing "fact" that the disastrous and simple Painter Whistler only took in hand the reins of government at least a year after the former driver had been

pitched from his box, and half the money-bags had been already lost!—from £8000 to £4000 at one fatal swoop! and the beginning of the end had set in! Indeed, this may have been one of the strong reasons for his own election by an overwhelming minority of hysterical and panic-stricken passengers.

Now, though he did his best, and cried aloud that the coach was safe, and called it Royal, and proposed to carry the mail, confidence, difficult to restore, waited for proof, and although fresh paint was spread upon the panels, and the President coachman wore his hat with knowing air, on one side and handled the ribbons lightly, and dandled the drag, inviting jauntily the passer-by, the public recognized the ramshackle old "conveyance," and scoffingly refused to trust themselves in the hearse.

"Four thousand pounds!" down it went—£3000—£2000—the figures are Wyke's—and this season, the ignominious "£1000 or under," is none of my booking! and when last I saw the mad machine it was still cycling down the hill.

The New Dynasty

SIR—Pray accept my compliments, and be good enough to inform me at once by whose authority, and upon what pretence, the painting, designed and executed by myself, upon the panel at the entrance of the galleries of Suffolk Street, has been defaced. Tampering with the work of an artist, however obscure, is held to be, in what might be called the international laws of the whole Art world, so villainous an offence, that I must at present decline to entertain the responsibility of the very distinguished and Royal Society of British Artists, for what must be due to the rash, and ill-considered, zeal of some enthusiastic and untutored underling.

The Morning Post.

Awaiting your reply, I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient, humble servant,

TO THE HON. SECRETARY
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS.

March 30, 1889.

Telegram to Council of Royal Society of British Artists:
"Congratulations upon dignity maintained as Artists left in charge of a brother Artist's work, and upon graceful bearing as officers toward their late President.—WHISTLER.

An Embroidered Interview

Pall Mall Gazette, April 3, 1889.

"WELL, Mr. Whistler, they say they only painted out your butterfly from the signboard, and changed the date. What do you say?"

"What do I say? That they have been guilty of an act of villainous Vandalism."

"Will you tell me the history of the Board?"

"When I was elected to the presidency of the Society I offered to paint a signboard which should proclaim to the passer-by the name and nature of the Society. My offer was accepted, and the Board was sent down to my studio, where I treated it as I should a most distinguished sitter—as a picture or an etching—throwing my artistic soul into the Board, which gradually became a Board no longer, as it grew into a picture. You say they say it was only a butterfly. Mendacity could go no further. I painted a *lion* and a butterfly. The lion lay with the butterfly—a harmony in gold and red, with which I had taken as

much trouble as I did with the best picture I ever painted. And now they have clothed my golden lion clumsily, awkwardly, and timorously with a dirty coat of black. My butterfly has gone, the checks and lines, which I had treated decoratively, have disappeared. Am I not justified in calling it a piece of gross Vandalism?"

"What course would you have recommended? You had gone; the Board remained: perhaps it was weather-beaten—what could they do?"

"They should have taken the Board down, sir, taken the Board down, not dared to destroy my work—taken the Board down, returned it to me, and got another Board of their own to practise on. Good heavens! You say to my face it was only a Board. You say they *only* painted out my butterfly. It is as if you were condoling with a man who had been robbed and stripped, and said to him, 'Never mind. It is well it is no worse. You have escaped easily. Why, you might have had your throat cut.'"

And Mr. Whistler's Mephistophelian form disappeared into the black of the night.

The "Pall Mall" Puzzled

MR. WHISTLER begs me to insert the following note exactly as it stands. I haven't the slightest idea what it means, but here it is with "*mes compliments*":— *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 4, 1889.

"To the Interviewer of the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

"Good! very good! Prettily put, as becomes the *Pall Mall*, and yet you cannot be reproached with being 'too fine for your audience!'

"I wish I *could* say these things as you do for me, even at the risk of, at last, being understood. *Mes Compliments!*"

Official Bumbledom

To the Editor of the *Morning Post*.

SIR—As you have considered Mr. Whistler's letter worthy of publication, I ask you to complete the publication by inserting this simple statement of the facts as they occurred. The notice board of the Royal Society of British Artists bears on a red ground, in letters of gold, the title of the Society. To this Mr. Whistler, during his presidency, added with his own hand a decorative device of a lion and a butterfly. On the eve of our private view it was found that, while the title of the Society, being in pure gold, remained untarnished, Mr. Whistler's designs, being executed in spurious metals, had nearly disappeared, and what little remained of them was of a dirty brown. The board could not be put up in that state. The lion, however, was not so badly drawn as to make it necessary to do anything more than restore it in permanent colour, and that has accordingly been done. But as the notice board was no longer the actual work

of Mr. Whistler, it would manifestly have been improper to have left the butterfly (his well-known signature) attached to it, even if it had not appeared in so crushed a state. The soiled butterfly was therefore effaced.

Yours, &c.,

WYKE BAYLISS,
CLAPHAM.

April 1, 1889.

"*Aussi que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*"

SIR—I have read Mr. Bayliss's letter, and am disarmed. I feel the folly of kicking against the parish pricks. These things are right in Clapham, by the common.

The Morning Post.

"*V'là ce que c'est, c'est bien fait—*
Fallait pas qu'il y aille! fallait pas qu'il y aille!"

And when, one of these days, all traces of history shall, by dint of much turpentine, and more Bayliss, have been effaced from the board that "belongs to us," I shall be justified, and it will be boldly denied by some dainty student that the delicate butterfly was *ever* "soiled" in Suffolk Street.

Yours, &c.,

The Royal Society of British Artists and their Signboard

The Athenæum, April 27, 1889.

SIR—The moment has now arrived when, it seems to me proper that, in your journal, one of the recognized Art organs of the country, should be recorded the details of an incident in which the element of grave offence is, not unnaturally, quite missed by the people in their indignation at the insignificance of the object to which public attention has so unwarrantably been drawn—a "notice board"!—the common sign of commerce!

Now, however slight might be the value of the work in question destroyed, it is surely of startling interest to know that *work may be destroyed*, or worse still, defaced and tampered with, at the present moment in full London, with the joyous approval of the major part of the popular press.

I leave to your comment the fact that in this instance the act is committed with the tacit consent of a body of gentlemen officially styled "artists," at

the instigation of their president, as he unblushingly acknowledges, and will here distinctly state that the "notice board of the Royal Society of British Artists" *did not* "bear on a red ground, in letters of gold, the title of the Society," and that "to this Mr. Whistler, during his presidency," *did not* "add with his own hand a decorative device of a lion and a butterfly." This damning evidence, though in principle irrelevant—for what becomes of the soul of a "Diocesan member of the Council of Clapham" is, artistically, a matter of small moment—I nevertheless bring forward as the only one that will at present be at all considered or even understood.

The "notice board" was of the familiar blue enamel, well known in metropolitan use, with white lettering, announcing that the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of British Artists was held above, and that for the sum of one shilling the public might enter.

I myself mixed the "red ground," and myself placed, "in letters of gold, the" *new* "title" upon it —in proper relation to the decorative scheme of the whole design, of which it formed naturally an all-important feature. The date was that of the Society's Royal grant, and in commemoration of its new birth. With the offending Butterfly, it has now been effaced in one clean sweep of independence, while the lion,

"not so badly drawn," was differently dealt with—it was found not "necessary to do anything more than restore it in permanent colour, and that," with a bottle of Brunswick black, "has accordingly been done;" and, as Mr. Bayliss adds, with unpremeditated truth, in the thoughtless pride of achievement, "the notice board was no longer the actual work of Mr. Whistler!"

This exposure of Mr. Bayliss's direct method I have wickedly withheld, in order that the Philistine impulse of the country should declare itself in all its freshness of execration before it could be checked by awkward discovery of mere mendacity, and a timid sense of danger, called justice.

Everything has taken place as I pleasantly foresaw, and there is by this time, with the silent exception of one or two cautious dailies, scarcely a lay paper in the land that has been able to refrain from joining in the hearty yell of delight at the rare chance of coarsely, publicly, and safely insulting an artist! In this eagerness to affront the man they have irretrievably and ridiculously committed themselves to open sympathy with the destruction of his work.

I wish coldly to chronicle this fact in the archives of the *Athenæum* for the future consideration of the cultured New Zealander.

An Official Letter

SIR—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, officially informing me that the Committee award me a second-class gold medal.

Pray convey my sentiments of tempered and respectable joy to the gentlemen of the Committee, and my complete appreciation of the second-hand compliment paid me.

And I have, Sir,
The honour to be
Your most humble, obedient servant,

J. McNEILL WHISTLER.

To the 1st Secretary,
Central Committee,
International Art Exhibition, Munich.

The Home of Taste

The Ideas of Mr. Blankety Blank on House Decoration

THE other day I happened to call on Mr. Blank,—Japanese Blank, you know, whose house is in far Fulham. The garden door flew open at my summons, and my eye was at once confronted with a house, the hue of whose face reminded me of a Venetian palazzo, for it was of a subdued pink. . . . . If the exterior was Venetian, however, the interior was a compound of Blank and Japan. Attracted by the curiously pretty hall, I begged the artist to explain this—the newest style of house decoration.

Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 1, 1888.

I need not say that Blank, being a man of an *original* turn of mind, with the decorative bump strongly developed, holds what are at present peculiar views upon wall papers, room tones, and so on. The day is dark and gloomy, yet once within the halls of Blank there is sweetness and light.

You must look through the open door into a luminous little chamber covered with a soft wash of lemon yellow.

From the antechamber we passed through the open door into a large drawing-room, of the same soft lemon-yellow hue. The blinds were down, the fog reigned without, and yet you would have thought that the sun was in the room.

Here let me pause in my description, and put on record the gist of our conversation concerning the Home of Taste.

"Now, Mr. Blank, would you tell me how you came to prefer tones to papers?"

"Here the walls used to be covered with a paper of a sombre green, which oppressed me and made me sad," said Blank. 'Why cannot I bring the sun into the house,' I said to myself, 'even in this land of fog and clouds?' Then I thought of my experiment and invoked the aid of the British house-painter. He brought his colours and his buckets, and I stood over him as he mixed his washes.

"One night, when the work was nearing completion, one of them caught sight of himself in the mirror, and remarked with astonishment upon the loveliness of his own features. It was the lemon-yellow beautifying the British workman's flesh tones.

"I assure you the effect of a room full of people in evening dress seen against the yellow ground is extraordinary, and," added Blank, "perhaps flattering."

"Then do I understand that you would remove all wall papers?"

"A good ground for distemper," chuckled Mr. Blank.

"But you propose to inaugurate a revolution."

"I don't go so far as that, but I am glad to be able to introduce my ideas of house furnishing and house decoration to the public," said Blank, "and I may tell you that when I go to America with my Paris pictures, I shall try and decorate a house according to my own ideas, and ask the Americans to think about the matter."

Another Poacher in the Chelsea Preserves

ATLAS—Nothing matters but the unimportant; so, at the risk of advertising an Australian immigrant of Fulham—who, like the Kangaroo of his country, is born with a pocket and puts everything into it—and, in spite of much wise advice, we ought not to resist the joy of noticing how readily a hurried contemporary has fallen a prey to its superficial knowledge of its various departments, and, culminating in a "Special Edition" last week to embody a lengthy interview headed "The Home of Taste," has discovered again the nest of the mare that was foaled years ago!

The World, Dec. 26, 1888.

How, by the way, so smart a paper should have printed its *naïf* emotions of ecstasy before the false colours which the "Kangaroo" has hoisted over his bush, defies all usual explanation, but clearly the jaunty reporter whose impudent familiarity, on a former memorable occasion, achieved my wondering admiration, must have been, in stress of business, replaced

by a novice who had never breakfasted with you and me, Atlas, and the rest of the world, in the "lemon-yellow," of whose beautiful tone he now, for the first time, is so completely convinced.

The "hue" on the "face" of the Fulham "Palazzo" he moreover calls "Venetian," and is pleased with it—and so was I, Atlas—*for I mixed it myself!*

And yet, O Atlas, they say that I cannot keep a friend—my dear, I cannot afford it—and *you* only keep for me their scalps!

"Many, when a thing was lent them, reckoned it to be found, and put them to trouble that helped them."

A Suggestion

A CERTAIN painter has given himself away to an American journalist, unless that gentleman has romanced, in the *Philadelphia Daily News*. According to him this person explained how he managed the press, and how he claimed to be the inventor of the system associated with the name of Mr. Whistler. The Art clubs and the studios have been flooded with the *Philadelphia Daily News*. Mr. Whistler sent on his own copy to the pretender, with the following note:—

Truth, March 28, 1889.

"You will blow your brains out, of course. Pigott has shown you what to do under the circumstances, and you know your way to Spain. Good-bye!"

The Habit of Second Natures

MOST Valiant *Truth* — Among your ruthless exposures of the shams of to-day, nothing, I confess, have I enjoyed with keener relish than your late tilt at that arch-impostor and pest of the period—the all-pervading plagiarist! *Truth*, Jan. 2, 1890.

I learn, by the way, that in America he may, under the "Law of '84," as it is called, be criminally prosecuted, incarcerated, and made to pick oakum, as he has hitherto picked brains—and pockets!

How was it that, in your list of culprits, you omitted that fattest of offenders—our own Oscar?

His methods are brought again freshly to my mind, by the indefatigable and tardy Romeike, who sends me newspaper cuttings of "Mr. Herbert Vivian's Reminiscences," in which, among other entertaining anecdotes, is told at length, the story of Oscar simulating the becoming pride of author, upon a certain evening, in the club of the Academy students, and

arrogating to himself the responsibility of the lecture, with which, at his earnest prayer, I had, in good fellowship, crammed him, that he might not add deplorable failure to foolish appearance, in his anomalous position, as art expounder, before his clear-headed audience.

He went forth, on that occasion, as my St. John—but, forgetting that humility should be his chief characteristic, and unable to withstand the unaccustomed respect with which his utterances were received, he not only trifled with my shoe, but bolted with the latchet!

Mr. Vivian, in his book, tells us, further on, that lately, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the "Decay of Lying," Mr. Wilde has deliberately and incautiously incorporated, "without a word of comment," a portion of the well-remembered letter in which, after admitting his rare appreciation and amazing memory, I acknowledge that "Oscar has the courage of the opinions . . . . of others!"

My recognition of this, his latest proof of open admiration, I send him in the following little note, which I fancy you may think *à propos* to publish, as an example to your readers, in similar circumstances, of noble generosity in sweet reproof, tempered, as it should be, to the lamb in his condition:—

"Oscar, you have been down the area again, I see!

"I had forgotten you, and so allowed your hair to grow over the sore place. And now, while I looked the other way, you have stolen *your own scalp!* and potted it in more of your pudding.

"Labby has pointed out that, for the detected plagiarist, there is still one way to self-respect (besides hanging himself, of course), and that is for him boldly to declare, 'Je prends mon bien là ou je le trouve.'

"You, Oscar, can go further, and with fresh effrontery, that will bring you the envy of all criminal *confrères*, unblushingly boast, 'Moi, je prends *son* bien là ou je le trouve!'"

CHELSEA.

In the Market Place

Truth, Jan. 9, 1890.

SIR—I can hardly imagine that the public are in the very smallest degree interested in the shrill shrieks of "Plagiarism" that proceed from time to time out of the lips of silly vanity or incompetent mediocrity.

However, as Mr. James Whistler has had the impertinence to attack me with both venom and vulgarity in your columns, I hope you will allow me to state that the assertions contained in his letters are as deliberately untrue as they are deliberately offensive.

The definition of a disciple as one who has the courage of the opinions of his master is really too old even for Mr. Whistler to be allowed to claim it, and as for borrowing Mr. Whistler's ideas about art, the only thoroughly original ideas I have ever heard him express have had reference to his own superiority as a painter over painters greater than himself.

It is a trouble for any gentleman to have to notice the lucubrations of so ill-bred and ignorant a person as Mr. Whistler, but your publication of his insolent letter left me no option in the matter.—I remain, Sir, faithfully yours,

OSCAR WILDE.

Panic

O TRUTH!—Cowed and humiliated, I acknowledge that our Oscar is at last original. At bay, and sublime in his agony, he certainly has, for once, borrowed from no living author, and comes out in his own true colours—as his own "gentleman." *Truth*, Jan. 16, 1890.

How shall I stand against his just anger, and his damning allegations! for it must be clear to your readers, that, beside his clean polish, as prettily set forth in his epistle, I, alas! am but the "ill-bred and ignorant person," whose "lucubrations" "it is a trouble" for him "to notice."

Still will I, desperate as is my condition, point out that though "impertinent," "venomous," and "vulgar," he claims me as his "master"—and, in the dock, bases his innocence upon such relation between us.

In all humility, therefore, I admit that the outcome of my "silly vanity and incompetent mediocrity," must be the incarnation: "Oscar Wilde."

Mea culpa! the Gods may perhaps forgive and forget.

To you, *Truth*—champion of the truth—I leave the brave task of proclaiming again that the story of the lecture to the students of the Royal Academy was, as I told it to you, no fiction.

In the presence of Mr. Waldo Story did Oscar make his prayer for preparation; and at his table was he entrusted with the materials for his crime.

You also shall again unearth, in the *Nineteenth Century Review* of Jan. 1889, page 37, the other appropriated property, slily stowed away, in an article on "The Decay of Lying"—though why Decay!

To shirk this matter thus is craven, doubtless; but I am awe-stricken and tremble, for truly, "the rage of the sheep is terrible!"

Just Indignation

OSCAR—How dare you! What means this disguise?

Upon perceiving the Poet, in Polish cap and green overcoat, befrogged, and wonderfully befurred.

Restore those things to Nathan's, and never again let me find you masquerading the streets of my Chelsea in the combined costumes of Kossuth and Mr. Mantalini!

An Advanced Critic

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—I find myself obliged to notice the critical review of the "Ten o'Clock," that appeared in your paper (March 6).

Pall Mall Gazette, March 28, 1888.

In the interest of my publishers, I beg to state formally that the work has not as yet been issued at all—and I would point out that what is still in the hands of the printer, cannot possibly have fallen into the fingers of your incautious contributor!

The early telegram is doubtless the ambition of this smart, though premature and restless one—but he is wanting in habit, and unhappy in his haste!—What will you? The *Pall Mall* and the people have been imposed upon.

Be good enough, Sir, to insert this note, lest the public suppose, upon your authority, that the "Ten o'Clock," as yet unseen in the window of Piccadilly, has, in consequence of this sudden summing up, been hurriedly withdrawn from circulation.—I am, Sir,

The Advantage of Explanation

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—Just three weeks after publication Mr. Whistler "finds himself obliged to notice the critical review of the 'Ten o'Clock' that appeared in your paper." He points out that "what is still in the hands of the printer cannot possibly have fallen into the fingers of your incautious contributor." I do not pretend to be acquainted with the multitudinous matters that may be in the hands of his publishers' printers. But I can declare—and you, Sir, will corroborate me—that a printed copy of Mr. Whistler's smart but misleading lecture was placed in my hands for review, and, moreover, that the notice did not appear until the pamphlet was duly advertised by Messrs. Chatto and Windus as ready. It is, of course, a matter of regret to me if, as Mr. Whistler suggests, his publishers' interests are likely to suffer from the review; but if

Pall Mall Gazette, March 31, 1888.

an author's work, in the reviewer's opinion, be full of rash statement and mischievous doctrine, the publishers must submit to the risk of frank criticism. But it will be observed that Mr. Whistler is merely seeking to create an impression that your Reviewer never saw the work he criticized, which is surely not a creditable position to take up, even by a sensitive man writhing under adverse criticism.—I am, Sir, most obediently,

YOUR REVIEWER.

Testimony

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—My apologies, I pray you, to the much disturbed gentleman, "Your Reviewer," who complains that I have allowed "just three weeks" to go by without noticing his writing. *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 7, 1888.

Let me hasten, lest he be further offended, to acknowledge his answer, in Saturday's paper.

After much matter, he comes unexpectedly upon a clear understanding of my letter—"It will be observed," he says naïvely, "that Mr. Whistler is merely seeking to create an impression that your Reviewer never saw the work he criticized,"—herein he is completely right, this is absolutely the impression I did seek to create—"which," he continues, "is surely not a creditable position to take up"—again I agree with him, and admit the sad spectacle a "Reviewer" presents in such position.

He further "declares," and calls upon you, Sir, to "corroborate" him, "that a printed copy of Mr. Whistler's misleading lecture was placed in my hands fo review"—and moreover, that "the notice did not appear until the pamphlet was duly advertised by Messrs. Chatto and Windus as ready."

Pausing to note that if the lecture had not seemed misleading to him, it would surely not have been worth uttering at all, I come to the copy in question—this could only have been a printed proof, quaintly acquired—as will be seen by the following letter from Messrs. Chatto and Windus, which I must beg you Sir, to publish, with this note—as it deals also with the remaining point, the advertisement of the pamphlet,

And, I am, Sir,

The following is the letter from Mr. Whistler's publishers:—

DEAR SIR—In reply to your question we have to say that we certainly have not sent out any copy of the "Ten o'Clock" to the press, or to anybody else excepting yourself. The work is still in the

printers' hands, and we have for a long time past been advertising it only as "shortly" to be published; indeed, only a few proofs have so far been taken from the type.

Yours faithfully,

CHATTO AND WINDUS.

An Apostasy

TO speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth may justly be required of the average witness; it cannot be expected, it should not be exacted, of any critical writer or lecturer on any form of art. . . . .

Mr. Whistler's Lecture on Art, by Algernon Charles Swinburne. *Fortnightly Review*, June 1888.

. . . . And it appears to one at least of those unfortunate "outsiders" for whose judgment or whose "meddling" Mr. Whistler has so imperial and Olympian a contempt. . . . .

Let us begin at the end, as all reasonable people always do: we shall find that Mr. Whistler concedes to Greek art a place beside Japanese. Now this, on his own showing, will never do; it crosses, it contravenes, it nullifies, it pulverizes his theory or his principle of artistic limitation. If Japanese art is right in confining itself to what can be "broidered upon the fan"—and the gist of the whole argument is in favour of this assumption—

REFLECTION
"If" indeed!

then the sculpture which appeals, indeed, first of all to our perception of beauty, to the delight of the eye, to the wonder and the worship of the instinct or the sense, but which in every possible instance appeals also to far other intuitions and far other sympathies than these, is as absolutely wrong, as demonstrably inferior, as any picture or as any carving which may be so degenerate and so debased as to concern itself with a story or a subject. Assuredly Phidias thought of other things than "arrangements"* in marble—as certainly as Æschylus thought of other things than "arrangements" in metre. Nor, I am sorely afraid, can the adored Velasquez be promoted to a seat "at the foot of Fusi-yama." Japanese art is not merely the incomparable achievement of certain harmonies in colour; *it is the negation, the immolation, the annihilation of everything else.* By the code which accepts as the highest of models and of masterpieces the cups and fans and screens with which "the poor world" has been as grievously "pestered" of late years as ever it was in Shakespeare's time "with such waterflies—"diminutives of nature"—as excited the scorn of his moralizing cynic, Velasquez is as unquestionably condemned as is Raphael or Titian. It is true that this miraculous power of hand (?)† makes beautiful

REFLECTION:

* Because the Bard is blind, shall the Painter cease to see?

REFLECTION:

"Cups and fans and screens," and Hamilton vases, and figurines of Tanagra, and other "waterflies."

REFLECTION:

† Quite hopeless!

for us the deformity of dwarfs, and dignifies the degradation of princes; but that is not the question. It is true, again, that Mr. Whistler's own merest "arrangements" in colour are lovely and effective;* but his portraits, to speak of these alone, are liable to the damning and intolerable imputation of possessing not merely other qualities than these, but qualities which actually appeal—I blush to remember and I shudder to record it—which actually appeal to the intelligence† and the emotions, to the mind and heart of the spectator. It would be quite useless for Mr. Whistler to protest—if haply he should be so disposed—that he never meant to put study of character and revelation of intellect into his portrait of Mr. Carlyle, or intense pathos of significance and tender depth of expression into the portrait of his own venerable mother. The scandalous fact remains, that he has done so; and in so doing has explicitly violated and implicitly abjured the creed and the canons, the counsels and the catechism of Japan. . . . .

* *REFLECTION:* Whereby it would seem that, for the Bard, the lovely is not necessarily "effective."

REFLECTION:

† The "lovely," therefore, confessedly does not appeal to the intelligence, emotions, mind, and heart of the Bard even when aided by the "effective."

And when Mr. Whistler informs us that "there never was an artistic period," we must reply that the statement, so far as it is true, is the flattest of all possible truisms; for no mortal ever maintained that there ever was a period in which all men were either

good artists or good judges of art. But when we pass from the positive to the comparative degree of historic or retrospective criticism, we must ask whether the lecturer means to say that there have not been times when the general standard of taste and judgment, reason and perception, was so much higher than at other times and such periods may justly and accurately be defined as artistic. If he does mean to say this, he is beyond answer and beneath confutation; in other words, he is where an artist of Mr. Whistler's genius and a writer of Mr. Whistler's talents can by no possibility find himself. If he does not mean to say this, what he means to say is exactly as well worth saying, as valuable and as important a piece of information, as the news that Queen Anne is no more, or that two and two are not generally supposed to make five.

REFLECTION:

Of course I do mean this thing—though most imprudent was the saying of it!—for this Art truth the Poet resents with the people.—June 1888.

But if the light and glittering bark of this brilliant amateur in the art of letters is not invariably steered with equal dexterity of hand between the Scylla and Charybdis of paradox and platitude, it is impossible that in its course it should not once and again touch upon some point worth notice, if not exploration. Even that miserable animal the "unattached writer" may gratefully and respectfully recognize his accurate apprehension and his felicitous application of well-

nigh the most hackneyed verse in all the range of Shakespeare's—which yet is almost invariably misconstrued and misapplied—"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;" and this, as the poet goes on to explain, is that all, with one consent, prefer worthless but showy novelties to precious but familiar possessions. "This one chord that vibrates with all," says Mr. Whistler, who proceeds to cite artistic examples of the lamentable fact, "this one unspoken sympathy that pervades humanity, is—Vulgarity." But the consequence which he proceeds to indicate and to deplore is calculated to strike his readers with a sense of mild if hilarious astonishment. It is that men of sound judgment and pure taste, quick feelings and clear perceptions, most unfortunately and most inexplicably begin to make their voices "heard in the land." Porson, as all the world knows, observed of the Germans of his day that "in Greek" they were "sadly to seek." It is no discredit to Mr. Whistler if this is his case also; but then he would do well to eschew the use of a Greek term lying so far out of the common way as the word "æsthete." Not merely the only accurate meaning, but the only possible meaning, of that word is nothing more, but nothing less, than this—an intelligent, appreciative, quick-witted person; in a word, as the lexicon has it, "one who perceives."

REFLECTION:
Je reviens donc de Pontoise!

The man who is no æsthete stands confessed, by the logic of language and the necessity of the case, as a thick-witted, tasteless, senseless, and impenetrable blockhead. I do not wish to insult Mr. Whistler, but I feel bound to avow my impression that there is no man now living who less deserves the honour of enrolment in such ranks as these—of a seat in the synagogue of the anæsthetic. . . . .

. . . . Such abuse of language is possible only to the drivelling desperation of venomous or fangless duncery: it is in higher and graver matters, of wider bearing and of deeper import, that we find it necessary to dispute the apparently serious propositions or assertions of Mr. Whistler. *How far the witty tongue may be thrust into the smiling cheek* when the lecturer pauses to take breath between these remarkably brief paragraphs it would be certainly indecorous and possibly superfluous to inquire. But his theorem is unquestionably calculated to provoke the loudest and the heartiest mirth that ever acclaimed the advent of Momus or Erycina. For it is this—that * "Art and Joy go together," *and that† tragic art is not art at all.* . . . .

. . . . The laughing Muse of the lecturer, "quam Jocus circumvolat," must have glanced round in expectation of the general appeal, "After that let us take

REFLECTION:

* Is not, then, the funeral hymn a gladness to the singer, if the verse be beautiful?

Certainly the funeral monument, to be worthy the Nation's sorrow buried beneath it, must first be a joy to the sculptor who designed it.

† At what point o my "*O'clock*" does Mr. Swinburne find this last—his own inconsequence?

The Bard's reasoning is of the People. His Tragedy is *theirs*. As one of them, the *man* may weep—yet will the artist rejoice—for to him is not "A thing of beauty a joy for ever"?

breath." And having done so, they must have remembered that they were not in a serious world; that they were in the fairyland of fans, in the paradise of pipkins, in the limbo of blue china, screens, pots, plates, jars, joss-houses, and all the fortuitous frippery of Fusi-yama.

REFLECTION: Before the marvels of centuries, silence, the only tribute of the outsider, is by him refused—and the dignity of ignorance lost in speech.

REFLECTION: If an æsthete, the Bard is no collector!

It is a cruel but an inevitable Nemesis which reduces even a man of real genius, keen-witted and sharp-sighted, to the level of the critic Jobson, to the level of the *dotard and the dunce,* when paradox is discoloured by personality and merriment is distorted by malevolence.(!) No man who really knows the qualities of Mr. Whistler's best work will imagine that he really believes the highest expression of his art to be realized in reproduction of the grin and glare, the smirk and leer, of Japanese womanhood as represented in its professional types of beauty; but to all appearance he would fain persuade us that he does.

In the latter of the two portraits to which I have already referred there is an expression of living character. . . . . This, however, is an exception to the general rule of Mr. Whistler's way of work: an exception, it may be alleged, which proves the rule. A single infraction of the moral code, a single breach of artistic law, suffices to vitiate the position of the preacher. And this is no slight escapade, or casual aberration; it is a full and frank defiance, a deliberate and elaborate

denial, hurled right in the face of Japanese jocosity, flung straight in the teeth of the theory which condemns high art, under penalty of being considered intelligent, to remain eternally on the grin.

If it be objected that to treat this theorem gravely is "to consider too curiously" the tropes and the phrases of *a jester* of genius, I have only to answer that it very probably may be so, but that the excuse for such error must be sought in the existence of the genius. A man of genius is scarcely at liberty to choose whether he shall or shall not be considered as a serious figure—one to be acknowledged and respected as an equal or a superior, not applauded and dismissed as *a tumbler or a clown.* And if the better part of Mr. Whistler's work as an artist is to be accepted as the work of a serious and intelligent creature, it would seem incongruous and preposterous to dismiss the more characteristic points of his theory as a lecturer with the chuckle or the shrug of mere amusement or amazement. Moreover, if considered as a joke, a mere joke, and nothing but a joke, this gospel of the grin has hardly matter or meaning enough in it to support so elaborate a structure of paradoxical rhetoric. It must be taken, therefore, as something serious in the main; and if so taken, and read by the light reflected from Mr. Whistler's more characteristically brilliant

canvases, it may not improbably recall a certain phrase of Molière's which at once passed into a proverb—"Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse." That worthy tradesman, it will be remembered, was of opinion that nothing could be so well calculated to restore a drooping young lady to mental and physical health as the present of a handsome set of jewels. *Mr. Whistler's opinion that there is nothing like leather—of a jovial and Japanese design—savours somewhat of the Oriental cordwainer.*

REFLECTION: A keen commercial summing up—excused by the "Great Emperor!"

"*Et tu, Brute!*'

WHY, O brother! did you not consult with me before printing, in the face of a ribald world, *that you also misunderstand*, and are capable of saying so, with vehemence and repetition.

Have I then left no man on his legs?—and have I shot down the singer in the far off, when I thought him safe at my side?

Cannot the man who wrote *Atalanta*—and the *Ballads* beautiful,—can he not be content to spend his life with *his* work, which should be his love,—and has for him no misleading doubt and darkness—that he should so stray about blindly in his brother's flower-beds and bruise himself!

Is life then so long with him, and *his* art so short, that he shall dawdle by the way and wander from his path, reducing his giant intellect—garrulous upon matters to him unknown, that the scoffer may rejoice and the Philistine be appeased while he

takes up the parable of the mob and proclaims himself their spokesman and fellow-sufferer? O Brother! where is thy sting! O Poet! where is thy victory!

How have I offended! and how shall you in the midst of your poisoned page hurl with impunity the boomerang rebuke? "Paradox is discoloured by personality, and merriment is distorted by malevolence."

Who are you, deserting your Muse, that you should insult my Goddess with familiarity, and the manners of approach common to the reasoners in the market-place. "Hearken to me," you cry, "and I will point out how this man, who has passed his life in her worship, is a tumbler and a clown of the booths—how he who has produced that which I fain must acknowledge—is a jester in the ring!

Do we not speak the same language? Are we strangers, then, or, in our Father's house are there so many mansions that you lose your way, my brother, and cannot recognize your kin?

Shall I be brought to the bar by my own blood, and be borne false witness against before the plebeian people? Shall I be made to stultify myself by what I never said—and shall the strength of your testimony turn upon me? "If"—"If Japanese Art is right in confining itself to what can be broidered upon the

fan" . . . . and again . . . . "that he really believes the highest expression of his art to be realized in reproduction of the grin and glare, the smirk and leer" . . . . and further . . . . "the theory which condemns high art, under the penalty of being considered intelligent, to remain eternally on the grin" . . . . and much more!

"Amateur writer!" Well should I deserve the reproach, had I ventured ever beyond the precincts of my own science—and fatal would have been the exposure, as you, with heedless boldness, have unwittingly proven.

Art tainted with philanthropy—that better Art result!—Poet and Peabody!

You have been misled—you have mistaken the pale demeanour and joined hands for an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual earnestness. For you, these are the serious ones, and, for them, you others are the serious matter. Their joke is their work. For me—why should I refuse myself the grim joy of this grotesque tragedy—and, with them now, you all are my joke!

Freeing a Last Friend

BRAVO! Bard! and exquisitely written, I suppose, as becomes your state.

The scientific irrelevancies and solemn popularities, less elaborately embodied, I seem to have met with before—in papers signed by more than one serious and unqualified sage, whose mind also was not narrowed by knowledge.

The World, June 3, 1888. Letter to Mr. Swinburne.

I have been "personal," you say; and, faith! you prove it!

Thank you, my dear! I have lost a *confrère;* but, then, I have gained an acquaintance—one Algernon Swinburne—"outsider"—Putney.

[*An Editor's Anxiety*

An Editor's Anxiety

IT is reported that Mr. Whistler, having received word that a drawing of his had been rejected by the Committee of the Universal Exhibition, arrived yesterday in Paris and withdrew all his remaining works, including an oil painting and six drawings. The French consider that he has been guilty of a breach of good manners. The *Paris*, for instance, points out that, after sending his works to the jury, he should have accepted their judgment, and appealed to the public by other methods.

Pall Mall Gazette, April 26, 1889.

Rassurez vous!

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—You are badly informed—a risk you constantly run in your haste for pleasing news. *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 27, 1889.

I have not "withdrawn" my works "from the forthcoming Paris Exhibition."

I transported my pictures from the American department to the British section of the "Exposition Internationale," where I prefer to be represented.

"The French" have nothing, so far, to do with English or American exhibits.

A little paragraph is a dangerous thing.

And I am, Sir,

CHELSEA.

Whistler's Grievance

AN ENTRAPPED INTERVIEW.

THE *Herald* correspondent saw Mr. Whistler at the Hôtel Suisse, and asked the artist about his affairs with the American Art Jury of the Exhibition.

"I believe the *Herald* made the statement," said Mr. Whistler, "that I had withdrawn all my etchings and a full-length portrait from the American section. It all came about in this way: In the first place, before the pictures were sent in, I received a note from the American Art Department asking me to contribute some of my work. It was at that time difficult for me to collect many of my works; but I borrowed what I could from different people, and sent in twenty-seven etchings and the portrait."

New York Herald, Paris Edition, Oct. 3, 1889.

"You can imagine that a few etchings do not have any effect at all; so I sent what I could get together. Shortly afterwards I received a note saying: 'Sir—

Ten of your exhibits have not received the approval of the jury. Will you kindly remove them?'"

"At the bottom of this note was the name 'Hawkins'—General Hawkins, I believe—a cavalry officer, who had charge of the American Art Department of the Exhibition.

"Well! the next day I went to Paris and called at the American headquarters of the Exhibition. I was ushered into the presence of this gentleman, Hawkins, to whom I said:—'I am Mr. Whistler, and I believe this note is from you. I have come to remove my etchings'; but I did not mention that my work was to be transferred to the English Art Section."

"'Ah!' said the gentleman—the officer—'we were very sorry not to have had space enough for all your etchings, but we are glad to have seventeen and the portrait."

"'You are too kind,' I said, 'but really I will not trouble you.'"

"Mr. Hawkins was quite embarrassed, and urged me to reconsider my determination, but I withdrew every one of the etchings, and they are now well hung in the English Department."

"I did not mind the fact that my works were criticized, but it was the discourteous manner in which it was done. If the request to me had been

made in proper language, and they had simply said: —'Mr. Whistler, we have not space enough for twenty-seven etchings. Will you kindly select those which you prefer, and we shall be glad to have them,' I would have given them the privilege of placing them in the American Section." . . . . .

"*Whacking Whistler*"

IN an interview in yesterday's *Herald* the eccentric artist, Mr. J. McNeill Whistler, "jumped" in a most emphatic manner upon General Hawkins, Commissioner of the American Art Department at the Exhibition. He objects to the General for being a cavalry officer; refers to him sarcastically as "Hawkins," and declares him ignorant of the most elementary principles alike of art and politeness—all this because he, Whistler, was requested by the Commissioner to remove from the Exhibition premises some ten of his rejected etchings.

New York Herald, Paris Edition, Oct. 4, 1889.

In a spirit of fair play a correspondent called upon General Hawkins, giving him an opportunity, if he felt so disposed, of "jumping," in his turn, on his excitable opponent. The General did feel "so disposed," and proceeded, in popular parlance, to "see" Mr. J. McNeill Whistler and "go him one better." In this species of linguistic gymnastics, by the way, the

military Commissioner asks no odds of any one. He began by gently remarking that Mr. Whistler, in his published remarks, had soared far out of the domain of strict veracity. This was not bad for a "starter," and was ably supported by the following detailed statement:—

"Mr. Whistler says he received a note from me. That is a mistake. I have never in my life written a line to Mr. Whistler.* What he did receive was a circular with my name printed at the bottom. These circulars were sent to all the artists who had pictures refused by the jury, and contained a simple request that such pictures be removed.

"Our way of doing business was not, it seems, up to Mr. Whistler's standard of politeness, so he got angry and took away, not only the ten rejected etchings, but seventeen others which had been accepted. It is a little singular that among about one hundred and fifty artists who received this circular, Mr. Whistler should have been the only one to discover its latent discourtesy. How great must be Mr. Whistler's capacity for detecting a snub where none exists!"

"In any case, there is not the slightest reason for Mr. Whistler's venting his ire upon me. I had no more to do with either accepting or rejecting his

* The official memory:
"DEAR SIR — I wish by return mail you would send description for oils; and if you desire to have titles to etchings printed, you will have to furnish the necessary material for copy.—
Yours faithfully,
RUSH C. HAWKINS,
Commissariat Général, Paris,
March 29, 1889.
(*Autograph.*)
To Mr. Whistler."

pictures than I had with painting them. What he sent us was judged on its merits by a competent and impartial jury of his peers. If there were ten etchings rejected it only shows that there were ten etchings not worthy of acceptance. A few days after the affair a trio of journalists—not all men either—came to me, demanding that I reverse this 'iniquitous decision,' as they styled it. I told these three prying scribblers in a polite way that if they would kindly attend to their own affairs I would try to attend to mine. In this connection, I may remark that there are in Paris a number of correspondents who ought not to be allowed within gun-shot of a newspaper office."

"The next mis-statement in Mr. Whistler's interview is in regard to the ultimate disposal of his important etchings. His words are:—'Mr. Hawkins was quite embarrassed, and urged me to reconsider my determination, but I withdrew every one of the etchings, and they are now well hung in the English department.'"

"Now, I leave it to any fair-minded person if the plain inference from this statement is not that the whole twenty-seven etchings were accepted by the English department. If not, what in heaven's name is he crowing about? But the truth is that while we

rejected only *ten* of his etchings, the English department rejected *eighteen* of them, and of the nine accepted only hung two on the line. Had Mr. Whistler been the possessor of a more even temper and a little more common sense, he would have had five or six of his works on the line in the American department, and nearly twice as many on exhibition than is actually the case. Really, I fail to see what he gained by the exchange, unless it was a valuable experience. He says I was embarrassed when I saw him; I fancy he will be embarrassed when he sees these facts in 'cold type.'"

"Whistler's Grievance"

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—I beg that you will kindly print immediately these, my regrets, that General Rush Hawkins should have been spurred into unwonted and unbecoming expression by what I myself read with considerable bewilderment in the *New York Herald*, October 3, under the head of "Whistler's Grievance." *New York Herald.*

I can assure the gallant soldier that I have no grievance.

Had I known that, when—over what takes the place of wine and walnuts in Holland—I remembered lightly the military methods of the jury, I was being "interviewed," I should have adopted as serious a tone as the original farce would admit of; or I might have even refused to be a party at all to the infliction, upon your readers, of so old and threadbare a story as that of the raid upon the works of art in the American section of the Universal Exhibition.

Your correspondent, I fancy, felt much more warmly, than did I, wrongs that—who knows?—are doubtless rights in the army; and my sympathies, I confess, are completely with the General, who did only, as he complains, his duty in that state of life in which it had pleased God, and the War Department, to call him, when, according to order, he signed that naïvely authoritative note, circular, warrant, or what not—for he did irretrievably fasten his name to it, whether with pen or print, thereby hopelessly making the letter his own. Thus have we responsibility, like greatness, sometimes thrust upon us.

On receipt of the document I came—I saw the commanding officer, who, until now, I fondly trusted, would ever remember me as pleasantly as I do himself—and, knowing despatch in all military matters to be of great importance, I then and there relieved him of the troublesome etchings, and carried off the painting.

It is a sad shock to me to find that the good General speaks of me without affection, and that he evinces even joy when he says with a view to my entire discomfiture:—"While we rejected only ten of his etchings, the English department rejected eighteen of them, and of the nine accepted, only hung two on the line."

Now, he is wrong!—the General is wrong.

The etchings now hanging in the English section—

and perfect is their hanging, notwithstanding General Hawkins's flattering anxiety—are the only ones I sent there.

In the haste and enthusiasm of your interviewer, I have, on this point, been misunderstood.

There was moreover here no question of submitting them to a "competent and impartial jury of his peers" —one of whom, by the way, I am informed upon undoubted authority, had never before come upon an "etching" in his hitherto happy and unchequered Western career.

We all knew that the space allotted to the English department was exceedingly limited, and each one refrained from abusing it. Here I would point out again, hoping this time to be clearly understood, that, had the methods employed in the American camp been more civil, if less military, all further difficulties might have been avoided. Had I been properly advised that the room was less than the demand for place, I would, of course, have instantly begged the gentlemen of the jury to choose, from among the number, what etchings they pleased. So the matter would have ended, and you, Sir, would have been without this charming communication!

The pretty embarrassment of General Hawkins on the occasion of my visit, I myself liked, thinking it

seemly, and part of the good form of a West Point man, who is taught that a drum-head court martial—and what else in the experience of this finished officer should so fit him for sitting in judgment upon pictures?—should be presided at with grave and softened demeanour.

If I mistook the General's manner, it is another illusion the less.

And I have, Sir,
the honour to be,
Your obedient servant,

AMSTERDAM, Oct. 6.

The Art-Critic's Friend

MR. WHISTLER has many things to answer for, and not the least of them is the education of the British Art-Critic. That, at any rate, is the impression left by a little book made up—apparently against the writer's will—of certain of the master's letters and *mots*. . . . . It is useful and pleasant reading; for not only does it prove the painter to have a certain literary talent—of aptness, unexpectedness, above all impertinence—but also it proves him never to have feared the face of art-critical man. . . . . To him the art-critic is nothing if not a person to be educated, with or against the grain; and when he encounters him in the ways of error, he leaps upon him joyously, scalps him in print before the eyes of men, kicks him gaily back into the paths of truth and soberness, and resumes his avocation with that peculiar zest an act of virtue does undoubtedly impart. Indeed, Mr. Whistler, so far from being the critic's enemy, is on the contrary the best

The Scots Observer, April 5, 1890.

friend that tradesman has ever had. For his function is to make him ridiculous. . . . .

. . . . Yes, Mr. Whistler is often "rowdy" and unpleasant; in his last combat with Mr. Oscar Wilde —("Oscar, you have been down the area again")—he comes off a palpable second; his treatment of 'Arry dead and "neglected by the parish" goes far to prove that his sense of smell is not so delicate nor so perfectly trained as his sense of sight. . . . .

A Question

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR—It is, I suppose, to your pleasant satisfaction in "The Critic's Friend" that I owe the early copy of the *Scots Observer*, pointed with proud mark, in the blue pencil of office, whereby the impatient author hastened to indicate the pithy personal paragraphs, that no time should be wasted upon other matter with which the periodical is ballasted.

The Scots Observer
April 19, 1890.

Exhilarated by the belief that I had been remembered—for vanity's sake let me fancy that you have bestowed upon me your own thought and hand—I plunged forthwith into the underlined article, and read with much amusement your excellent appreciation.

Having forgotten none of your professional manner as art arbiter, may I say that I can picture to myself easily the sad earnestness with which you now point

the thick thumb of your editorial refinement in deprecation of my choicer "rowdyism"? And knowing your analytical conscientiousness, I can even understand the humble comfort you take in Oscar's meek superiority; but, for the life of me, I cannot follow your literary intention when you say that my care of "'Arry,' dead and neglected by the parish," goes far to prove that my "sense of smell is not so delicate nor so perfectly trained as" my "sense of sight."

Do you mean that my discovery of the body is the result of a cold in the head? and that, with a finer scent, I should have missed it altogether? or were you only unconsciously remembering and dreamily dipping your pen into the ink of my former description of "'Arry's" chronic catarrh? In any case, I am charmed with what I have just read, and only regret that the ridiculous "Romeike" has not hitherto sent me your agreeable literature.—Also I am, dear Sir, your obedient servant,

[*The End of the Piece*

The End of the Piece

SIR—I beg to draw your attention to the contents of your letter to the *Scots Observer*, dated April 12th, in which you state that you "regret the ridiculous Romeike has not hitherto sent me your agreeable literature."

This statement, had it been true, was spiteful and injurious, but being untrue (entirely) it becomes malicious, and I must ask you at once to apologise.

And at the same time to draw your attention to the fact that we have supplied you with 807 cuttings.

We have written to the *Scots Observer* for an ample apology, or the matter will be placed in our solicitor's hands, and we demand the same of you.

Yours obediently,

ROMEIKE & CURTICE.

J. McN. WHISTLER, Esq.
April 25, 1890.

Exit the Prompter

SIR—If it be not actionable, permit me to say that you *really are delightful! !*

Naïveté, like yours, I have never met—even in my long experience with all those, some of whose "agreeable literature" may be, I suppose, in the 807 cuttings you charge me for.

Who, in Heaven's name, ever dreamed of you as an actual person?—or one whom one would mean to insult?

My good Sir, no such intention—believe me—did I, in my wildest of moments, ever entertain.

Your scalp—if you have such a thing—is safe enough!—and I even think—however great my willingness to assist you—could not possibly appear in the forthcoming Edition.

To Mr. ROMEIKE,
April 25.

L'Envoi

WHEN the Chairman, in a singularly brilliant and felicitous speech led up to the toast of the evening, Mr. Whistler rose to his feet.

Report of a reply to the toast of the evening at the complimentary dinner given to Mr. Whistler, London, May 1, 1889.

"You must feel that, for me," said Mr. Whistler, "it is no easy task to reply under conditions of which I have so little habit. We are all even too conscious that mine has hitherto, I fear, been the gentle answer that sometimes turneth not away wrath."

Sunday Times, May 5, 1889.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this is an age of rapid results, when remedies insist upon their diseases, that science shall triumph and no time be lost; and so have we also rewards that bring with them their own virtue. It would ill become me to question my fitness for the position it has pleased this distinguished company to thrust upon me."

"It has before now been borne in upon me, that in surroundings of antagonism, I may have wrapped myself, for protection, in a species of misunderstand-

ing—as that other traveller drew closer about him the folds of his cloak the more bitterly the winds and the storm assailed him on his way. But, as with him, when the sun shone upon him in his path, his cloak fell from his shoulders, so I, in the warm glow of your friendship, throw from me all former disguise, and, making no further attempt to hide my true feeling, disclose to you my deep emotion at such unwonted testimony of affection and faith."

FINIS

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